

Separate Interests to National Agendas

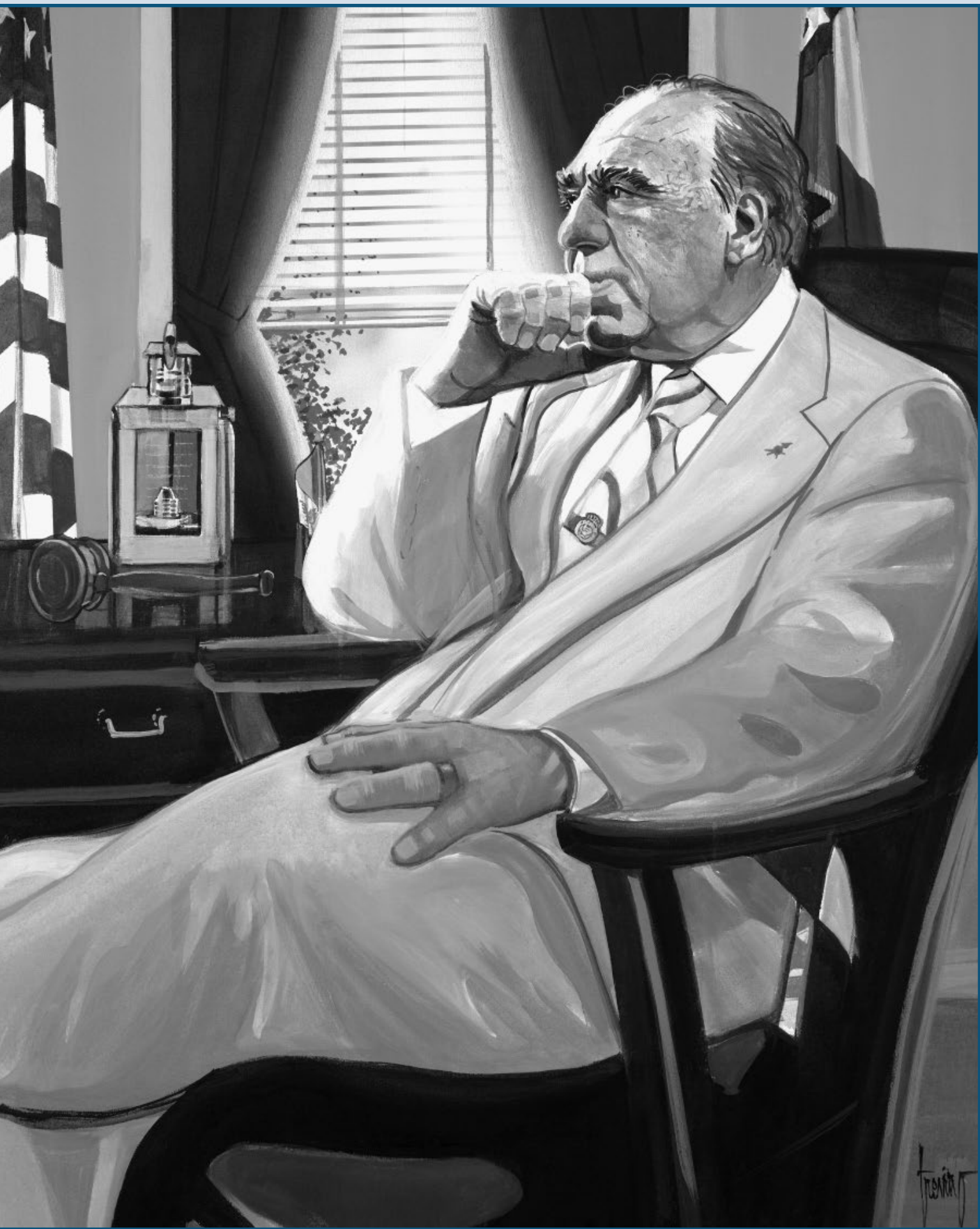
HISPANIC-AMERICAN MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA, 1945–1977

In June 1952 two long-running but often dissimilar paths of Hispanic-American congressional history converged, if only for a moment. At issue was the transformation of Puerto Rico from a colonial territory to a U.S. commonwealth. Under Puerto Rico's proposed constitution, the island's new government, the Estado Libre Asociado (Free Associated State or ELA), would be linked to the U.S. mainland by matters involving foreign affairs, but its authority to govern locally would be enhanced. Congress initially approved the concept, but quickly split over a constitutional human rights provision that had wide support among the Puerto Rican people.

In the U.S. Senate, one faction sought to establish Congress's ability to approve or reject amendments to the island's constitution, essentially stripping Puerto Ricans of sovereignty.¹ One such advocate bluntly argued that Congress essentially had the option to "give them a constitution or not give it to them." Dennis Chavez of New Mexico, on the other hand—often that chamber's lone proponent for boosting Hispanic civil rights—pushed back: "The Puerto Ricans did not ask us to take [their political rights]; we took them," he said. In areas of the world where the U.S. was then working to contain the spread of communism, including in the Caribbean Basin, Chavez noted that America's efforts would be aided by treating Puerto Ricans with more equanimity.² Chavez's intervention in the debate foreshadowed an important trend in this era—the increasing cooperation among advocates for Hispanic issues on a national scale. In this instance, the amendment giving Congress the right to void amendments to the island's constitution was stripped from the final legislation; likewise the language regarding human rights was removed from the constitution.³

Henry B. González of Texas is the longest-serving Hispanic American in congressional history. With years of experience as a civil rights proponent in San Antonio and Texas politics, González won a seat in the U.S. House in 1961 in a special election. He went on to serve more than 37 years, helped found the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and became the chairman of the influential House Banking Committee.

Henry B. González, Jesse Trevino, 1997, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives





This union poster urges consumers to boycott buying lettuce and grapes to support efforts to improve working conditions for migrant farmworkers.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

This era in the history of Hispanic Americans in Congress is best narrated from two perspectives. The first involves Mexican-American strides toward civil rights reforms in the mainland United States, which were enabled by Chavez and other Hispanic Congressmen; the second, Puerto Rico's evolution from territory to commonwealth, made possible by a long line of reform-minded Resident Commissioners like Fernós-Isern. Widely divergent at the beginning of this period, these perspectives became inextricably intertwined by its end: Local agendas became state agendas, state policy interests became regional agendas, and regional agendas became national agendas. The policy interests of Hispanic Americans from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds became increasingly similar, as well. The creation of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus at the close of this era consolidated these agendas, lending them additional strength.

In the 30 years after World War II, Hispanic Americans living in the Southwest and Puerto Rico experienced remarkable changes that redefined their elected representatives' legislative careers. Prior to the global conflict, Mexican Americans in the Southwest lived in segregated communities with limited opportunities for social or political advancement. As occurred during the disfranchisement of African Americans in the South, local and state governments erected roadblocks such as poll taxes and English literacy tests to restrict Hispanics' electoral participation and moved polling places beyond the reach of their segregated communities.⁴ During the 1930s and 1940s, a small number of politically active middle-class Hispanics formed local organizations that challenged segregation in the courts and in their communities. During World War II, the industrial mobilization of the United States increased employment opportunities and enabled more Hispanic Americans to enlist in the military. The war also led Hispanic-American activists and Members of Congress to press for civil rights.

Rapid grass-roots organizing, often occurring simultaneously throughout the country, nationalized Mexican-American political issues during the 1940s and 1950s as civil rights organizations fought segregation, enabling future Members of Congress to parlay local activism into statewide and nationwide careers. By the early 1960s, some prominent Hispanic civil rights organizations had begun mobilizing into regional and national associations, not only to promote their social agendas but also to register new voters and propel Mexican-American politicians into local, state, and federal offices. At the same time, working-class activists formed grass-roots organizations that promoted Hispanic-American issues and inspired the Chicano movement, which emphasized a positive self-image for Hispanics in the face of discrimination. By the late 1960s, dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party and uneven progress toward achieving social and political equality had emboldened college-bound and working-class Hispanics to embrace more-activist tactics, to hold their elected representatives accountable through protests, and to form third parties such as La Raza Unida, a movement that conveyed ethnic pride while enabling local activists to initiate social and political change.⁵

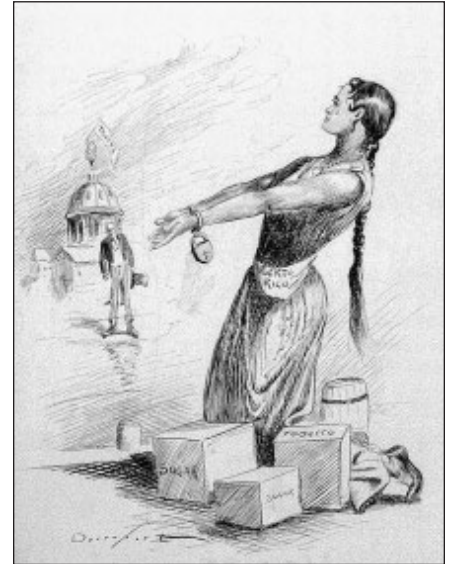
Puerto Ricans had a different experience. Before World War II, islanders elected their representatives in the insular house and senate, but they could

not elect their own governor. Moreover, any decisions made by Puerto Rico's legislature could be nullified or modified by the executive council, a board of non-Puerto Ricans selected by the U.S. President. From its inception in 1917, Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners had worked to mitigate the effects of the Jones Act and gain more autonomy (and federal resources) for the island. However, after the creation of the *Estado Libre Asociado* (ELA) in 1952, the role of Resident Commissioners had changed from advocating for greater autonomy to that of a "cost-plus lobbyist" who appealed to Democrats and Republicans for resources in a nonconfrontational manner, according to a political observer.⁶ For much of this period, Resident Commissioners debated the role and function of the office. Even as Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners acquired more institutional privileges after the passage of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, their overall power and influence in Washington and Puerto Rico decreased because of the passage of the Elective Governor Act of 1948 and the institution of commonwealth status in 1952. Eventually, Mexican-American activists in the Southwest and Puerto Rican activists in the Caribbean and the Northeast, increasingly unified by the civil rights movement and the Chicano movement, began to combine their resources. By the early 1970s, as Resident Commissioners gained influence in the House, the Hispanic-American Members of Congress, who once worked separately, began working together to improve the welfare of Hispanic Americans across the United States, and in 1976 they formed the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

PRECONGRESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Family/Ethnic Roots

Like their predecessors, the Hispanic Members of this era frequently hailed from politically connected families. Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner Jaime Benítez was born into a literary family; his ancestors included several famous 19th-century poets. Texas Representative Eligio (Kika) de la Garza II, descended from a Spanish land grant family, traced his roots to Southern Texas as far back as the 18th century. Ron de Lugo, the Virgin Islands' first Delegate to Congress, was descended from the original Spanish settlers in the Caribbean; his grandfather emigrated from Puerto Rico to the Virgin Islands in 1879. New York's Herman Badillo became the first Puerto Rican-born U.S. Representative, having migrated to New York City with his guardian in 1941, like thousands of others who left the island to seek economic opportunities on the mainland. Four other Hispanic Members also followed their parents into political service. Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz spent his youth learning English and observing the congressional tenure of his father, Resident Commissioner Félix Córdova Dávila, in the 1920s. New Mexican Senator Joseph Montoya's father was sheriff of Sandoval County in the late 1920s; Texas Representative Henry González's father served as mayor of Mapimi, Mexico; and New Mexico Representative Manuel Luján, Jr.'s father served six years as mayor of Santa Fe, New Mexico, before running for a seat in the U.S. House and the governorship of New Mexico in the 1940s.



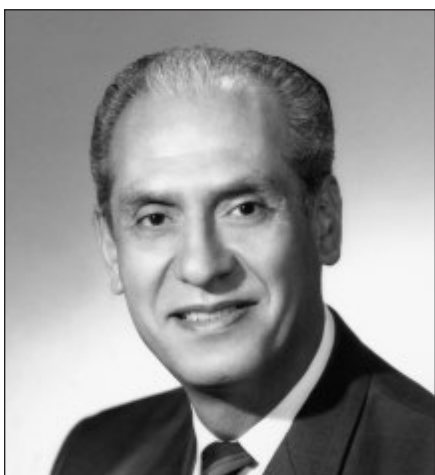
A political cartoon from the early twentieth century depicts Puerto Rico in shackles, an allusion to U.S. tariff rates that hurt sugar and tobacco producers on the island. The issue of more equitable agricultural tariff rates was a consistent one.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Eligio (Kika) de la Garza of Texas, first elected to the House in 1964, served 32 years and was the longtime chairman of the Agriculture Committee.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Edward Roybal of California was elected in 1949 to the Los Angeles City Council—the first Hispanic American to serve in that post in the twentieth century. Elected to the U.S. House in 1962, Roybal served 30 years, chaired an Appropriations subcommittee, and cofounded the Hispanic Caucus.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Photography Collection

Age Relative to the Rest of the Congressional Population

Whereas Members of Congress were typically younger in this era, Hispanic-American Representatives, Senators, and Resident Commissioners as a whole were older than their congressional contemporaries and, on average, older when they were first elected (about 47.4 years old) than were past generations of Hispanic-American Members.⁷ The youngest Member during this era was Kika de la Garza, who was sworn in at age 37 on January 4, 1965. The oldest was Resident Commissioner Jaime Benítez, who was 64 on his first day in office, January 3, 1973.

The advanced median age of the Hispanic-American Members of this generation was a byproduct of their long political service before their election to Congress. Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners, especially, rose to prominence with their contemporary Luis Muñoz Marín, who was also born in the late 19th century, and with his dominant Partido Popular Democrático (Popular Democratic Party, or PPD), which was formed in 1938. All the Resident Commissioners from this period except Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz were allied initially with the powerful Muñoz Marín, whose political career started in the 1920s and spanned more than 40 years. The youngest Resident Commissioner, Santiago Polanco-Abreu, who was 44 when he took office in 1965, represented the next generation of PPD politicians who were groomed under Muñoz Marín.⁸

Education, Professions, and Prior Political Experience

All but one Hispanic-American Member in this era had held a political office at the local or state level, and some attained powerful positions in their municipalities.⁹ Joseph Montoya was one of the youngest members of the New Mexico state house of representatives in 1936 (at age 21). He eventually served as majority leader before serving a single term in the state senate and then three years as lieutenant governor. Resident Commissioner Santiago Polanco-Abreu entered the insular house of representatives almost immediately after college in 1947 and eventually served as speaker in 1963. Henry González served in the San Antonio city council and the Texas state senate before making a long-shot bid for Texas governor in 1958. California Representative Edward Roybal was the first Hispanic to be elected to the Los Angeles city council since the early 1880s and served in that body from 1949 to 1963. Herman Badillo worked his way up through the Democratic Party in local clubs and campaigns in East Harlem, becoming Bronx borough president in 1965 and running unsuccessfully for New York City mayor in 1973 and 1977.

Another commonality among postwar Hispanic Members was higher education; with the exception of Ron de Lugo, who served in the U.S. Army, all these Members pursued some form of higher education. Eight of the 12 pursued graduate degrees, and consistent with the general congressional trend, all but two were lawyers.¹⁰

CRAFTING AN IDENTITY

Committee Assignments and Leadership

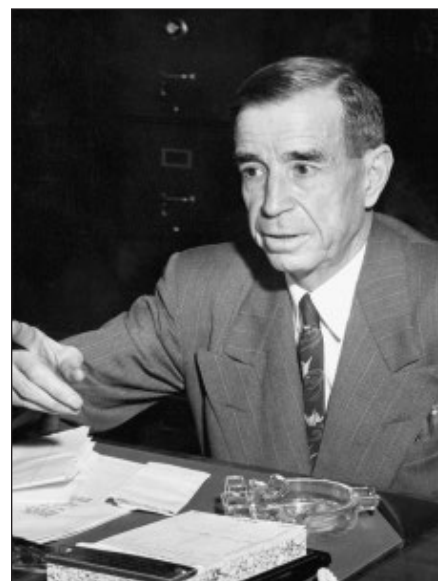
Several members of this generation of Hispanic Americans in Congress held prominent committee assignments. Like their House colleagues, many sat on committees that reflected their legislative interests.¹¹ Four individuals served as committee chairs. Henry González and Kika de la Garza led standing committees (the Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee and the Agriculture Committee, respectively) after serving long apprenticeships. Republican Manuel Luján was the Ranking Member on two committees.¹² Although he did not chair a standing committee, Joseph Montoya held prominent committee posts early in his congressional career, serving on the Judiciary Committee as a freshman and on the House Appropriations Committee in his second term. Montoya later served on the Senate Appropriations Committee after he was elected to that chamber in 1964.

Initially, Resident Commissioners operated under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, which limited their participation to the House Committees on Agriculture, Armed Services, Insular Affairs, and Interior and Insular Affairs (formerly called Public Lands) and prevented them from voting in committees, gaining seniority, or wielding the chairman's gavel. That changed after the Córdova Amendment was adopted as part of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, making Resident Commissioners more like full Members.¹³ Had he been permitted as Resident Commissioner to accrue seniority, Antonio Fernós-Isern would have been the senior member of the Committee on Insular Affairs. "He [has] been a most able member of [the] Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and is the most senior member in point of longevity," Chairman Wayne Aspinall of Colorado said of Fernós-Isern.¹⁴

Although this generation of Hispanic-American Members made significant strides—serving for multiple terms of service, acquiring attractive committee assignments, and gaining seniority so as to become chairman or Ranking Members—none served in a party leadership position.

Numbers of Hispanic Americans in Congress

The cohort of Hispanic Americans in Congress grew during this era, despite the fact that for more than a decade—from the 79th to the 86th Congresses (1945–1961)—there were just three Hispanic-American Members serving simultaneously. Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico, At-Large Representative Antonio Fernández of New Mexico, and Resident Commissioner Antonio Fernós-Isern served for much of this period. New Mexico and Puerto Rico continued to send the most Hispanic Americans to Congress and to re-elect the most Hispanic-American Members to consecutive terms. Fernós-Isern served for a total of 18 years (1946–1965). Fernández served in the House for 13 years until his untimely death in 1956. There were still three Hispanic-American Members after Fernández's successor, Joseph Montoya, was elected in 1957. However, the number of Hispanic-American Members began to increase with the election of Henry González in 1961. At the start of the 88th Congress (1963–1965), there were four Hispanic-American Members in the House with the election of Edward Roybal of California. After Dennis Chavez died



New Mexico's Dennis Chavez was the first Hispanic Member to serve in both houses of Congress. Elected to office during the New Deal, he served in the House for two terms before winning election to the Senate. Throughout his career, Chavez supported public works projects, national defense, and civil rights issues.

Image courtesy of the U.S. Senate Historical Office

In this undated photograph, Herman Badillo of New York (right) talks with Ronald Dellums of California (left) on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

Image courtesy of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

in 1962, it was another two years until Hispanic-American Joseph Montoya was elected to the Senate. By the start of the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), the number of Hispanic-American Members had increased with the election of Ron de Lugo of the Virgin Islands. However, Hispanic Americans were still grossly underrepresented relative to their percentage of the general population, which was concentrated in the Southwest. “Seven million voters have but six elected officials, one Senator and five Members of Congress,” Montoya noted on the Senate Floor in 1972. “Three million Chicanos in California have but one congressman, Edward R. Roybal ... [in] New York City ... one and a half million Puerto Ricans have but one representative ... in the person of Herman Badillo.”¹⁵



Legislative Interests

Their small numbers meant that the Hispanic Members of Congress lacked influence to push a legislative agenda for much of this period. Often, even while major civil rights bills worked their way through Congress, these Members remained on the legislative sidelines. Historian Juan Gómez-Quíñones notes that although these Members “did not have a major impact on legislation ... [they] contributed to the informational and coordinative resources available to Mexican American organizations” and secured employment for Hispanic Americans in other areas of the federal government.¹⁶ Many Hispanic legislators worked behind the scenes to lay the groundwork for the passage of significant bills. Representative Antonio Fernández helped Fernós-Isern shepherd legislation that enabled Puerto Rico to elect its own governor and establish the island as a commonwealth. Fernández guided the Elective Governor Act of 1948 (P.L. 80-362) to passage by blocking an amendment that would have altered the measure; he also authorized legislation for the ELA, despite charges by more-conservative Members that he was promoting socialism.¹⁷ Within the New Mexico delegation, Senator Chavez worked with Fernández and Joseph Montoya to promote legislation that helped the state. In one case, the delegation

secured passage of S. 107 (P.L. 87-483), a bill that authorized the Department of the Interior to build an irrigation project for Navajo Indians along the Colorado River for \$221 million in 1962.¹⁸

Throughout this period, Hispanic Americans in Congress broadly supported the emerging civil rights agenda, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and its extensions in 1970 and 1975, but by the late 1960s, there were divisive opinions on certain pieces of legislation. In 1968 Joseph Montoya introduced S. 740, a bill to establish a presidential Cabinet committee to develop recommendations for jobs for Hispanic Americans. According to Montoya, passage of the bill would “assure that Federal programs are reaching all Spanish Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, Cuban Americans, and all other Spanish-speaking and Spanish-surnamed Americans, to provide the assistance they need, and to seek out new programs that might be necessary to handle programs that are unique to such persons.”¹⁹ Although Representatives Luján, Roybal, and de la Garza voted to pass the bill, Henry González voted against it because it lacked “powers to act, and none to compel action. Nor have we given any mandate to the Executive to Act,” he said. “What we have done ... is to create an illusion and we are calling that help.”²⁰ The bill passed the Senate with minor amendments and then passed the House with a few amendments, becoming law (83 Stat. 838, 1969–1970) on December 30, 1969.²¹

Although they worked hard within the institution and helped improve the experience of Hispanic Americans nationwide, Hispanic-American Members also spent considerable time on their districts. As the Representative of a district with high levels of unemployment, Luján supported legislation to extend tax credits to businesses in economically deprived states like New Mexico. Luján’s district included several American Indian reservations, and throughout his tenure he supported tribal sovereignty, including the return of land titles to Taos Pueblos and financial assistance for tribal economic development.²² Like most Western Congressmen (of both parties), Luján sought to protect local water rights and opposed what he saw as excessive federal control over New Mexico’s water resources. Luján’s regional focus and attention to his district easily won him re-election for most of his congressional career.²³ Herman Badillo also adopted a district-centered approach. With his many disadvantaged constituents in mind, Badillo consistently supported legislation to help the poor, including initiatives to increase employment, provide comprehensive child care, and start community development programs.²⁴

Unidos Meeting of 1971

In June 1971, Representative Badillo announced that a number of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American activists met to discuss “the formation of a Chicano-Boricua coalition or alliance ... to demand specific legislation and programs aimed at meeting the needs of the Spanish-speaking community.”²⁵ In September 1971, four Hispanic Members of the 92nd Congress—Representatives Badillo, Roybal, and Luján and Senator Montoya—agreed to sponsor a national conference to bring together Southwestern Mexican-American and Northeastern Puerto Rican civil rights groups and to reach out

From left to right: Senator Joseph Montoya of New Mexico and Representatives Edward Roybal of California and Herman Badillo of New York attend the Unity Conference in October 1971.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



Hispanic activists pushed mainstream civil rights groups and elected officials to pursue economic and social reforms with greater vigor. Here, young Chicano movement members display protest signs in 1970.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

to the growing Cuban-American community in South Florida.²⁶ Badillo and Roybal served as co-chairmen, and Montoya was the keynote speaker. The National Spanish-Speaking Coalition Conference, under the banner Unidos (Unity), took place in Arlington, Virginia, on October 23 and 24, 1971.²⁷ Roybal described one of his primary goals, “We want to set up an organization with political muscle ... [because] Spanish-speaking people have been short-changed by the federal government for too long.” Both chairs “hoped the conference would develop solutions to problems ... such as job discrimination in both public and private employment, bilingual education, economic development, housing and community action programs.” Not all Hispanic Americans in Congress agreed that working together to further Hispanic-American political concerns was the best course, however. Representatives González and de la Garza disassociated themselves from the conference, attracting widespread media attention. González was concerned that the conference might lead to the “creation of an isolated position.... Our task is to overcome political isolation, and it is a delicate path that makes the difference between attracting a friend and becoming isolated and alone,” he said.²⁸ In the end, the coalition erected political platforms and legal strategies to combat discrimination by filing a lawsuit against four federal agencies and calling for an investigation by the Justice Department of police brutality against Hispanic Americans.²⁹ The conferees also agreed to create a national political action campaign to promote legislation and monitor law enforcement.³⁰

DEPRESSION, WAR, AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Hispanics in the Southwest

Before 1910, Mexican immigrants traveled frequently between the United States and Mexico because of the light enforcement of the borders. Many came to the United States temporarily to look for work or visit family or friends. Despite stronger laws restricting European and Asian immigrants from the 1900s to the 1920s, “transnational movement back and forth between the United States and Mexico remained largely unhindered, and the border between the

two countries went virtually unregulated.”³¹ In part, this reflected the needs of U.S. farmers, particularly in the West and the Southwest, for Mexican field workers. By 1929 the Southwest was responsible for 40 percent of the United States’ total fruit and vegetable output.³² To support this level of production and the region’s economic status, growers relied heavily on the inexpensive labor of Mexican workers.³³

Mexican immigrants also played a prominent role in the rail and mining industries. For example, Mexicans made up 43 percent of Arizona’s copper-mining workforce, and by 1922 they constituted 85 percent of the railroad workforce in the Southwest.³⁴ Various groups began to protest as their presence expanded. Small farmers objected because they were forced to compete with larger farms that employed cheaper Mexican labor. Organized labor also objected, fearing that the overuse of immigrant labor would depress wages.³⁵ Thus, in the 1920s, many unions operated under an informal agreement to exclude Mexicans and lobbied the federal government to regulate Mexican immigration. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) was particularly active, attempting to promote emigration restrictions in Mexico through its relationship with that country’s major labor organization.³⁶ However, both proponents and opponents of Mexican immigration agreed that it was undesirable for Mexicans to become permanent members of U.S. society, and supporters of Mexican labor sought to assuage concerns that Mexicans were seeking integration.³⁷

Immigration restriction gained momentum during the 1920s. With the creation of the Border Patrol in 1925, the federal government began trying to curb illegal immigration.³⁸ Tipping the fragile balance in favor of those opposing Mexican labor was the realization that, contrary to the assurances of Mexican labor supporters, Mexicans became permanent members of U.S. society. From 1910 to 1920, for example, Mexican immigrants were the leading foreign-born group in California, and by 1930 they constituted 19 percent of its immigrant population.³⁹ At the same time, California’s naturalization rate for Mexicans was declining. In light of these facts, reform groups that had previously supported integration began advocating increased limitations on Mexican immigration.⁴⁰

In the face of such restrictions, younger generations of immigrants had begun building communities and a common cultural identity in the United States, nurtured by emerging Spanish-language media in urban areas like Los Angeles, California, and San Antonio, Texas.⁴¹ In Southwestern states, Mexican Americans lived under a modified Jim Crow system that limited their movement and hampered their opportunities for social and economic advancement. Across the Sunbelt, the enforcement of legal segregation in workplaces, housing, and schools was common. Texas instituted rigid segregation, whereas New Mexico protected *nuevomexicanos*’ civil rights under its constitution but tended to separate the races in social settings. California used what one scholar calls “race-based legal distinctions and selective law enforcement” to enforce segregation. By the 1930s, a small but politically active middle class emerged and challenged these barriers of “political disparateness, ideological ambiguousness, economic exploitation, social fragmentation, and educational discrimination,” according to one historian.⁴² These activists began to fight the Anglo-dominated political



An image of the Santa Rita pit copper mine in southwestern New Mexico in 1940—at the time the largest such mine in the world. In the early 20th century, Mexican workers accounted for nearly half the copper-mining workforce in the U.S. Southwest.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



A Mexican onion picker pauses in a field near Tracy, California, in 1935. During the Great Depression, various U.S. groups sought to prevent the employment of migrant workers who were seen as competition for scarce jobs.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

establishment by forming *mutualistas* (mutual aid societies) and social clubs to improve living conditions, publicize civil rights issues, and confront segregation practices directly.⁴³

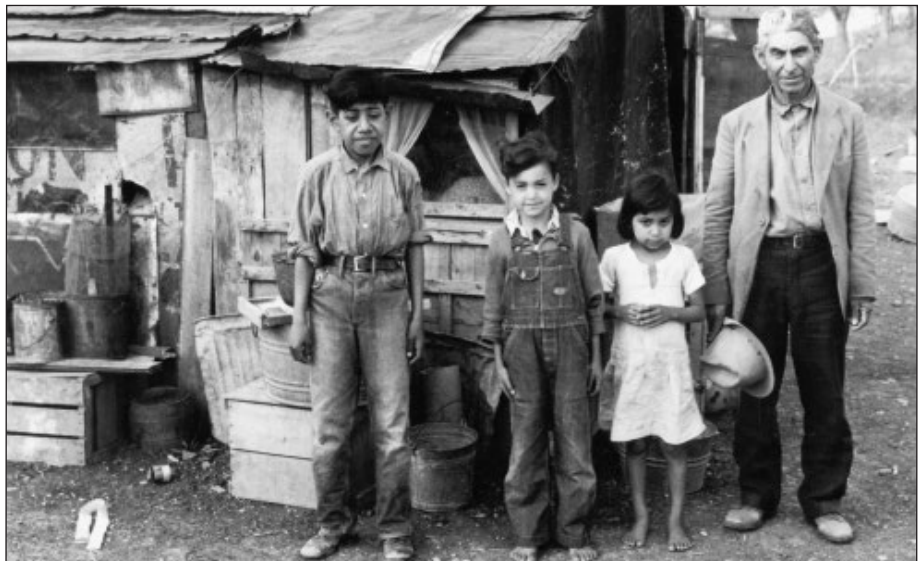
Repatriation During the Great Depression

While Mexican Americans experienced racial discrimination during the early 20th century, the degree of prejudice varied according to regional economic conditions. Predictably, the Great Depression marked a period of extreme hardship for Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. After the stock market crashed on Thursday, October 24, 1929, industrial production fell by 50 percent, and investment dwindled to a trickle. Job losses increased sharply, and by 1932 the U.S. unemployment rate was 25 percent. Neither the agricultural market nor its increasingly mechanized means of production was immune to these hardships. The Depression forced many rural Southwestern residents into the cities in search of work and support. Los Angeles, in particular, was attractive to Mexicans because of the *barrios* (neighborhoods), which had been established by earlier generations of immigrants. By 1930 Los Angeles' Mexican population was second only to Mexico City's.⁴⁴

As the Depression wore on and job opportunities shrank, workers became more desperate, and animosity toward Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans intensified. The devastating Dust Bowl in the Midwest and the South aggravated the situation, forcing farmers westward in droves in search of employment. In response, white Americans pressured employers to exclude noncitizens, sometimes resulting in the exclusion of non-whites, even if they were citizens. For example, California's legislature adopted a law in 1931 prohibiting companies that conducted business with the government from employing noncitizens in public jobs.⁴⁵ Similar discrimination pervaded the welfare system, as people of Mexican descent consumed a decreasing share of public benefits. This trend developed as the Mexican population grew, constituting a steady proportion of those who were eligible for benefits, especially in urban areas, where unemployment skyrocketed.⁴⁶

The Vignes, an immigrant family from Mexico, stand outside their dilapidated shack in Austin, Texas, in the early 1940s. The U.S. Housing Authority, created during the New Deal, began to address the needs of impoverished Southwestern residents by developing public housing projects.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Soon after the stock market crash, federal and local governments began formulating plans to repatriate Mexican workers in the United States. In 1930, echoing sentiments throughout the Southwest, President Herbert Hoover denounced Mexicans as a factor contributing to the Depression and ordered the Labor Department to develop a deportation program.⁴⁷ Eager to recover skilled workers for its economy, the Mexican government obligingly identified them and paid for their transportation to Mexico.⁴⁸ The program was initiated in Southern California under the direction of the federal government, with state and local government support, and expanded throughout the Southwest. In 1931 alone, anywhere from 50,000 to 75,000 individuals returned to Mexico. Los Angeles lost approximately one-third of its Mexican population during this period.⁴⁹ Between 1929 and 1935, more than 400,000 people were repatriated to Mexico, including U.S. citizens of Mexican descent. Approximately 85,000 more Mexicans returned to Mexico voluntarily. Most repatriates continued to live in poverty.⁵⁰ Some attempted to return to the United States, but they were denied entry by federal border authorities.⁵¹

In 1929 Mexican Americans in San Antonio, Texas, founded the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), which sought to challenge and eliminate segregation and to protect these citizens' constitutional rights. The group was formed at a crucial time, when anti-Mexican sentiment threatened to erupt. With the establishment of the draft and a high enlistment rate for Hispanic Americans during World War II, some of LULAC's advisors were employed by the U.S. government as liaisons to the Hispanic-American community.⁵²

Hispanic Americans During World War II

As the United States moved closer to war with the Axis powers, Hispanic Americans, like many other Americans, experienced a rapid change in their social status. Historian Manuel Gonzales estimates that as many as 750,000 Hispanic-American men and women saw active service in the war. Along with the option to participate in the military, an expansion in wartime manufacturing enabled thousands of Mexican Americans to enter the workforce.⁵³

U.S. government officials realized that incorporating racial minorities into the war effort was pivotal to achieving victory, and to promoting free-market capitalism abroad after the war.⁵⁴ Mitigating domestic and racial discrimination benefited emerging political constituencies at home, and policymakers also viewed the issue as a matter of national security: In highlighting human rights abuses and racial discrimination perpetrated by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, the United States invited criticism from its enemies, who pointed to legal segregation in the South and the marginalization of ethnic minorities elsewhere.⁵⁵ American officials wanted to maintain positive relations with allies such as Mexico, whose diplomats received numerous complaints about racial discrimination from Mexican immigrants in the United States. Mexican officials sought to protect Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans by complaining to the U.S. State Department about their treatment. The Franklin D. Roosevelt administration responded by monitoring discriminatory practices in the Southwest and promoting work exchanges between the two countries.⁵⁶



Hundreds stand in a line wrapping around a New York City block, waiting for bread handouts in 1932. The Great Depression plunged the nation into a prolonged, severe economic crisis. The U.S. unemployment rate reached nearly 25 percent; for minority groups it was much higher.

Image courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library/
National Archives and Records Administration



Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico introduced legislation during World War II to create a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. Chavez believed such a step would advance the rights of Hispanic Americans nationwide.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Dennis Chavez and the Creation of the Fair Employment Practices Committee

On June 25, 1941, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which declared “full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin” based on “the firm belief that the democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders.” The order required that the federal government, unions, and defense industries “provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers.”⁵⁷ Roosevelt’s mandate also created the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) in the federal Office of Personnel Management to investigate complaints about unjust hiring practices. Thousands availed themselves of the FEPC mechanism. From July 1, 1943, to June 30, 1944, the committee logged more than 4,000 complaints, nearly 80 percent of which involved discrimination based solely on race.⁵⁸ Much of the remaining 20 percent involved ethnic and religious intolerance, which Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico found particularly troubling given its effect on his constituents.⁵⁹

The FEPC’s work underscored Chavez’s efforts on behalf of the nation’s veterans, particularly those in his Southwestern constituency. “If they go to war, they are called Americans—if they run for office, they are Spanish-Americans, but if they are looking for jobs, they are referred to as damn Mexicans,” Chavez noted.⁶⁰ In its report to the President, the employment committee concurred with Chavez and urged the establishment of policies to protect labor rights. “Wartime gains of Negro, Mexican-American and Jewish workers are being lost through an ‘unchecked revival’ of discriminatory practices,” the committee concluded. Moreover, minorities who served in the war had more difficulty finding work than did their white contemporaries. Without direct action, civil unrest would undoubtedly follow and “be a cause of embarrassment to the United States in its international relations,” reported the *New York Times*.⁶¹

On June 23, 1944, Chavez introduced a bill to establish a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. Appointed chairman of an Education and Labor subcommittee that oversaw issues related to fair employment, Chavez used the subcommittee hearings to demonstrate the extent of discrimination in the United States, whose effects made the creation of an employment commission a national concern.⁶² Though the 78th Congress (1943–1945) adjourned before the Senate considered his bill, Chavez reintroduced it during the 79th Congress (1945–1947). Days later, Southern Senators filibustered it.⁶³ The bill’s opponents framed employment discrimination as a local issue that was outside Congress’s purview; numerous state governments, including Chavez’s own, had already rejected fair employment bills. Democrat Carl Hatch, New Mexico’s senior Senator, called the bill unconstitutional, arguing, “When we attempt to force by law tolerance, respect, mutual good will, and such things, we are only aggravating the conditions which we seek to improve.”⁶⁴ Republican Robert Taft of Ohio had similar concerns and expressed reservations that overregulation would hamper free trade.⁶⁵ Supporters pointed out that the legislation encompassed transportation and communication issues and affected interstate commerce.⁶⁶ As Senate Majority Leader Alben Barkley of

Kentucky considered possible areas for compromise, the bipartisan opposition dug in its heels, and the Senate voted against cloture. “It took the crucifixion of Christ to redeem the world,” Chavez remarked, disheartened but not surprised. “It took intestinal fortitude to bring about the Declaration of Independence. It took ordinary American decency to bring about the Constitution to the United States. It took the death of Americans during the Civil War to find out that this was one country. It took this vote today to find out that a majority cannot have its will.”⁶⁷ Undeterred, Chavez fought to protect the civil rights of all citizens until his death in 1962.

The Bracero Program

After the United States entered World War II, the need for agricultural production and labor increased dramatically. The cessation of trade with Europe eliminated a major supplier of agriculture products, and large numbers of domestic workers left the agricultural workforce for the military or higher-paying defense work.⁶⁸ While there were roughly one million domestic migrant workers in 1940, that number decreased to approximately 60,000 by 1942.⁶⁹ Foreseeing such shortages, cotton and vegetable growers in the Southwest petitioned Congress to permit the hiring of temporary laborers.⁷⁰ Analyzing the labor needs of the agricultural sector in the late 1940s, President Harry S. Truman’s Commission on Migratory Labor stated, “The demand for migratory labor is thus essentially twofold: To be ready to go to work when needed, to be gone when not needed.”⁷¹

While the United States was eager to recruit Mexican workers who had been displaced during the previous decade, the Mexican government based its cooperation on the establishment of standards for workers’ wages, housing, and food as well as worker protections if demand for farm labor declined. Moreover, the Mexican government required contracts in Spanish and insisted that the United States pay workers’ transportation across the border.⁷² In 1943 Congress



A family of Mexican laborers travel north of the U.S. border in 1944 to participate in the Bracero Program, which brought temporary workers to the United States. During World War II, such laborers filled positions in the agriculture and railroad industries vacated by U.S. men who joined the military.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

authorized the Bracero Program with large majorities in both chambers. President Roosevelt signed the bill into law (P.L. 78-45) on April 23, 1943.⁷³

Initially the Bracero Program proved popular; immigrant workers earned a living while the Mexican economy benefited from worker remittances.⁷⁴ However, many employers ignored the protections in the 1943 agreement, subjecting *braceros* (seasonal farm workers) to excessive costs, poor food and housing, exposure to harmful substances, and discrimination.⁷⁵ Eventually an agreement between the worker and the grower replaced the contract between the U.S. government and the *bracero*, effectively undermining the federal government's oversight role. To limit transportation costs, farmers insisted that recruitment centers be located close to the U.S.-Mexico border, but this promoted illegal immigration, as workers who were ineligible for the Bracero Program were also a short distance from the border.⁷⁶

In this undated photograph, children work as farm laborers beside their adult counterparts.

Photograph by Paul Fusco, Magnum Photos; image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Judiciary Committee Chairman Emanuel Celler of New York attempted to include employee sanctions by submitting amendments to the Agricultural Act of 1949. “Without the sanctions,” Celler said, “you have here an engraved invitation for the predatory interests along the border ... to go into Mexico and induce people, smugglers, and procurers” to illegally transport laborers to the U.S. to work on “the plantations and on the ranches, and on the huge farms.”⁷⁷ Democratic Representative Antonio Fernández of New Mexico vehemently disagreed, asserting, “If what you want is to starve every illegal Mexican alien out of this country; it is most effective.” Fernández criticized the amendment, saying it “affects and punishes a lot of other laborers who are not Mexican aliens, but Americans.... A man of my nationality, American, but of Mexican and Spanish descent, would be very adversely affected in his efforts to obtain employment.” He predicted the amendment would require “the farmer to become [a] policeman, an investigator, an informer, or run the risk of being a criminal.... He will employ only the Mexican with an immigration card and the Negro to the exclusion of Americans who look, speak, and have names like the Mexican nationals,” Fernández said.⁷⁸ After spirited debate, an overwhelming majority rejected Celler’s amendment.

Congressional opponents of the Bracero Program focused on its negative effect on domestic employment. Senator Chavez, speaking in 1943 on the initial authorization of the Bracero Program, stated, “[In] justice to ourselves and in justice to the boys who are doing the fighting, our own citizens should have the opportunity of working on our farms. They should be given the opportunity to pick citrus fruits and vegetables in Florida, and cotton in the Southwest.”⁷⁹ Later, Representatives George McGovern of South Dakota and Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota insisted the agreement disadvantaged small family farmers competing with large farms with the ability to hire *braceros*.⁸⁰ While the agreement restricted the *braceros* to agricultural or railroad work, there was concern that *braceros* remaining in the United States after their contract had expired could easily move into the industrial sector.⁸¹

Support for the program eroded as opposition grew louder by the 1960s. Stricter regulations by the Department of Labor greatly reduced the number of *braceros* who were admitted, as labor organizations such as the AFL-CIO gained more influence. In addition, the mechanization of agriculture lessened the need for Mexican labor. While the reauthorization of the measure in 1951 had passed with strong support, the 1961 and 1963 reauthorizations were far more contentious.⁸² The program eventually expired in 1964.⁸³

Illegal Immigration and the End of the Bracero Program

While the Bracero Program lacked provisions to discourage illegal immigration, it was generally believed that the availability of a legal route to the American labor market would reduce illegal entry. However, illegal immigration increased during the operation of the Bracero Program. Many Mexicans who were not qualified to participate in the program crossed the border illegally and found work with growers who wanted to keep operating costs low. Texas, particularly, relied on undocumented labor to augment its workforce after being expelled from the Bracero Program for noncompliance.⁸⁴

Under pressure from the Mexican government to increase the regulation of illegal immigration, the U.S. Border Patrol initially redirected its scarce resources to the U.S.-Mexico border, doubling the number of officers on patrol.⁸⁵ Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) apprehension rates skyrocketed during the next decade, rising from 11,715 in 1943 to 885,587 in 1953, with Mexicans constituting a growing proportion of that number.⁸⁶ Growers in the Southwest and their Members in Congress routinely pressed the INS to relax its enforcement of immigration law, especially when labor was in high demand. Also, as a study pointed out, Congress consistently failed to fund the INS at levels commensurate with its task. Thus, while the INS assigned more agents to work along the border, its total force was cut by a third from 1942 to 1951.⁸⁷

In 1951 President Truman’s Commission on Migratory Labor released a report blaming low wages in the Southwest and social ills on illegal immigration: “The magnitude ... has reached entirely new levels in the past 7 years.... In its newly achieved proportions, it is virtually an invasion,” the report said.⁸⁸ After touring Southern California in August 1953 to assess the impact of illegal immigration, President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Attorney General, Herbert Brownell, Jr., pushed Congress to enact sanctions against employers



Cars cross the international border between Juarez, Mexico, and El Paso, Texas, in the late 1930s. U.S. shoppers during the Great Depression took advantage of a favorable exchange rate by traveling into Mexico to buy goods.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



A rocket-shaped campaign button touted Edward Roybal of California in the 1960s. Roybal, like other Hispanic politicians of the era, got his start in local politics after World War II and emerged on the national scene in the 1960s.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

of undocumented workers and to confiscate the vehicles that were used to bring them to the United States.⁸⁹ While neither proposal became law, the administration moved forward on plans for a deportation operation.⁹⁰ On June 9, 1954, INS Commissioner General Joseph Swing announced the commencement of “Operation Wetback.”⁹¹ The first phase of the operation began in California and Arizona.⁹² Its effectiveness depended on publicity as well as manpower. Extensive media coverage that often exaggerated the strength of the Border Patrol, as well as targeted displays of strength, gave the impression of a greater force. In many regions, this strategy convinced thousands who had entered the U.S. illegally to repatriate voluntarily. In Texas, for example, more than 63,000 individuals returned to Mexico of their own volition; U.S. officials detained an additional 42,000 persons in July 1954. An INS report later indicated that the agency apprehended nearly 1.1 million individuals.⁹³ The INS operation won at least tacit support from several key groups; the Mexican government, labor groups, and even Mexican-American civil rights groups acknowledged the labor problem, but they withheld extensive criticism.⁹⁴ While the raids disrupted the growing seasons in California and Arizona, the government pacified farm owners with promises of additional *bracero* labor.⁹⁵ Though the program was touted as a success, its effects were short-lived; illegal entry exploded again after the United States terminated the Bracero Program in 1964.⁹⁶

Hispanic Interests and Political Representation After World War II (1945–1970)

The end of the war was a watershed moment in the development of Hispanic-American political activism. Hispanic troops had fought in theaters across the globe, and returning veterans began taking advantage of education and job training programs. Better credentials led to better jobs, “with more workers than ever before entering skilled and semiskilled positions,” writes historian Juan Gómez-Quíñones. As a direct offshoot of this development, veterans flooded civic groups like LULAC, Texas’ GI Forum (created in 1948), and Los Angeles’ Community Service Organization (CSO; cofounded by veteran and future Representative Edward Roybal in 1947), whose cumulative effect was to galvanize political awareness, register voters, and generate leadership throughout the Southwest. Conditions varied, however, and Hispanic-American politicians had different experiences in each state. In New Mexico, numerous Hispanic Americans served in positions at the state and local level, where well-organized networks of Hispanic voters could swing results in close elections. During this period, New Mexico sent three Representatives to Congress who served multiple terms (Fernández, 13 years; Montoya, 19 years, including a dozen years in the Senate; and Luján, 20 years) and attained prominent positions.⁹⁷ California and Texas had stricter segregation practices, whose effects on Hispanic Americans varied greatly. The number of Hispanic Americans in Texas who were actively involved in politics was second only to the number in New Mexico. Despite Jim Crow segregation, Hispanics actively participated in counties and municipal wards throughout Texas.⁹⁸

The Civil Rights Movement and Its Influence on Mexican Americans

By 1960, grass-roots organizations like LULAC, the GI Forum in Texas, and the CSO in Los Angeles had successfully challenged legal segregation in the courts.⁹⁹ As historian Gómez-Quíñones states, years of organized protest by African Americans in the South provided Hispanic Americans west of the Mississippi with a model for their civil rights campaigns. Before long, a national movement emerged. Since the country's major political parties seemed unwilling to adopt the concerns of their Hispanic constituencies, community leaders began organizing groups with broad agendas. The Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) was formed in 1959 out of frustration with the Democratic Party's general indifference to Hispanic-American concerns. The Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASSO) was founded in 1960 to nurture political talent and encourage Hispanic candidates to run for office. Though electoral results were mixed, such efforts provided valuable political experience for future candidates.¹⁰⁰

1960 Presidential Election and Mexican-American Politics

Despite Hispanic Americans' political successes at the local, state, and regional levels, victories at the national level were fewer and farther between in the first half of the 20th century. Mexican Americans had participated in Democratic National Conventions since the 1940s, but according to Gómez-Quíñones they "were not widely recognized electorally as a significant factor in the national presidential elections."¹⁰¹ However, in 1959, the John F. Kennedy campaign encouraged the formation of "Viva Kennedy" clubs to mobilize Hispanic-American voters for the 1960 presidential election. Mexican-American politicians such as future Congressman Henry González organized club activities in Texas (and served as state co-chair), and Edward Roybal, as MAPA's chair, used political networks to rally Hispanic-American voters around the Kennedy



Edward Roybal of California and Henry González of Texas organized "Viva Kennedy" clubs in their states in support of John Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign. Within two years, both men would win election to the U.S. House.

Private Collection



Puerto Rican Governor Luis Muñoz Marín and his wife, Inés, host President John Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy during the president's tour of Latin American nations in 1962.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



César Chávez, a farm worker, civil rights advocate, and labor leader, cofounded the National Farm Workers Association (later the United Farm Workers).

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Senator Joseph Montoya of New Mexico was a leading supporter of the Bilingual Education Act.

Image courtesy of the U.S. Senate Historical Office

candidacy. Kennedy himself devoted considerable resources toward addressing the concerns of Hispanic voters, visiting and campaigning in areas with large concentrations of Mexican Americans. He “shared with most of them a Roman Catholic religious heritage, and had a wife who spoke to them in Spanish,” Gómez-Quíñones observes. That year 85 percent of Mexican Americans nationally voted for Kennedy.¹⁰²

The political mobilization of Mexican-American voters during the election had far-reaching consequences. The “Viva Kennedy” clubs enabled activists to muster large numbers of potential voters through registration drives and grass-roots initiatives. Both González (in 1961) and Roybal (in 1962) used this energized political base to win election to the U.S. House of Representatives after Kennedy’s victory.

Rise of the Chicano Movement

Lingering dissatisfaction with Democratic inattention to Mexican-American concerns fueled another challenge to the status quo.¹⁰³ Many civil rights organizations had developed from a small but politically active middle class in urban areas, and many Mexican-American activists “faced ... a juncture between integration and self-determination” that emerged from the inconsistent results of lobbying for civil rights since the late 1940s. By the early 1960s, a number of grass-roots movements that consisted mainly of urban working-class and agricultural workers in the Southwest used more confrontational tactics to protest segregationist practices. Although established civil rights organizations refused to support these groups, college students provided a receptive audience. Calling themselves Chicanos, these activists demanded immediate social reforms through the acquisition of political power. According to Gómez-Quíñones, instead of working within a system that benefited Hispanic Americans only marginally, Chicanos augmented conventional civil rights protest strategies by aggressively promoting radical social change for working-class groups in Mexico and the United States.¹⁰⁴

The Chicano movement challenged “the assumptions, politics, and principles of the established political leaders, organizations, and activity within and outside the [Mexican-American] community.” Newer organizations like the United Farm Workers (led by César Chávez) and the Crusade for Justice worked alongside established organizations like LULAC and MAPA to represent the interests of middle- and working-class Mexican Americans in the 1960s.¹⁰⁵

For much of the decade, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had maintained working relationships with the country’s Hispanic population, but by 1966 these partnerships had begun to fray. During an EEOC meeting in March 1966, representatives from LULAC and the GI Forum criticized the commission for its inattention to Hispanic concerns and its lack of a Hispanic representative or staff member. Fifty representatives walked out in protest. In response, the administration added a Hispanic member and sponsored the creation of the Inter-Agency Cabinet Committee on Mexican-American Affairs, an initiative Senator Montoya endorsed wholeheartedly.¹⁰⁶ Montoya, who also

guided the Bilingual Education Act toward final passage in 1968, often used his influence to support the Chicano movement while shepherding legislation that benefited Hispanic Americans nationwide.

Hispanic-American Members of Congress reacted to social movements outside the institution in various ways. In a 1967 Senate Floor speech, Montoya spoke about Hispanic Americans' living conditions and about their desire to attain equality without sacrificing their ethnic identity. "Most Spanish-Americans are near or at the bottom of the economic heap ... [and] usually lag even behind Negroes in years of schooling attained, with some 30 percent of the Spanish-surnamed male adults being categorized as functional illiterates," he said. Citing contributing factors such as a "lack of job skills, inadequate schooling, and language problems," Montoya described the effects of social discrimination on Mexican Americans in the Southwest and cited their attempts to bridge the cultural gap by learning English and following some Anglo-American customs. Hispanic Americans "clearly want equal opportunity and full acceptance now, not in the distant and hypothetical future, and they do not believe that their difference—either presumed or real—from Anglo-Americans offers any justification for denial of opportunity and acceptance" within U.S. society.¹⁰⁷

Henry González, on the other hand, showed little patience for the efforts of separatists and radicals in the Chicano movement. "No matter how worthy their ideals may be, [they] have fallen into the spell and trap of reverse racism," he declared.¹⁰⁸ In April 1969, González denounced several key leaders of the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO)—which used inflammatory rhetoric to mobilize young political activists in the Southwest and was key to the establishment of the party *La Raza Unida*—as "purveyors of hate."¹⁰⁹ He also attacked quasi-government entities such as the Ford Foundation, which provided grants to promote Hispanic engagement in politics but which, González insisted, did little to monitor the funding or prevent its distribution to radical groups.¹¹⁰ González distinguished efforts to develop pride in one's ethnicity and organize communities from cultural chauvinism, racial hatred, and self-aggrandizement. "The tragic thing is that in situations where people have honest grievances, dishonest tactics can prevent their obtaining redress," González noted, "and where genuine problems exist, careless or unthinking or consciously mean behavior can unloose new forces that will create new problems that might require generations to solve. I want to go forward, not backward; I want the creation of trust, not fear; and I want to see Americans together, not apart," he said.¹¹¹

Much of the problem was generational.¹¹² In the same way González recoiled at *La Raza Unida*'s youthful idealism, Chicano activists scorned him as a *patron* from an earlier era who was more concerned with his status in the Mexican-American community than with advancing Chicano issues. Harsher critics believed he cared more about Anglo interests than about those of his Latino constituency. "Gonzalez is criticized by many Mexican-American militants for being a *Tío Thomas*, or Uncle Tom," noted the *Dallas Morning News* in 1969.¹¹³



Henry González of Texas was an early proponent of Hispanic civil rights in the years after World War II. González, however, became concerned that tactics adopted by activists in the 1960s and 1970s threatened to marginalize Hispanic Americans.

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rican Migration and Political Participation

Since the late 19th century, Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States has been characterized by the continual migration of people from the island to the mainland. Some scholars have characterized this as "one of Puerto Rico's most constant historical realities."¹¹⁴ Driven largely by economic and political conditions, the earliest migrants tended to be educated elites and artisans who had fled the island to escape Spanish tyranny. But after the United States took control of Puerto Rico in 1898, bringing with it a modicum of political stability, large-scale agribusinesses took root, transforming the island's traditional domestic economy. U.S. capital flowed south as mainland-controlled sugar, coffee, and needlework sectors reshaped Puerto Rico's means of production. The change to a consumer-driven economy created a new working class, and close relations between labor organizations in Puerto Rico—particularly Santiago Iglesias's Federación Libre de los Trabajadores (Free Federation of Laborers, or FLT)—and the American Federation of Laborers (AFL) created a direct connection between mainland industry and Puerto Rican laborers. The FLT actively encouraged Puerto Ricans to work in mainland factories, and after the Jones Act of 1917 granted Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship, Puerto Rican migration increased even more. The number of Puerto Ricans in the mainland United States—numbered at 1,513 in 1910—swelled tenfold by 1920 and grew another 500 percent in the following decade. The Great Depression and World War II slowed the rate of increase, but the number of Puerto Ricans arriving on the mainland continued to climb.¹¹⁵

By the 1950s, the flow of Puerto Ricans to the mainland United States had increased so drastically that historians dubbed the phenomenon the "Great Migration." An estimated 470,000 people—or 21 percent of the island's total population—left Puerto Rico for the United States between 1950 and 1960.¹¹⁶ By the end of the decade, 30 percent of all native-born Puerto Ricans were living on the mainland, primarily in *colonias*, dense, centralized neighborhoods inhabited predominantly by Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic Americans.¹¹⁷ The earliest Puerto Rican migrants settled in New York City; before 1920 they clustered in East Harlem on the Upper East Side, an area that came to be known as Spanish Harlem or El Barrio.¹¹⁸ In 1950, 80 percent of mainland Puerto Ricans lived in New York City.¹¹⁹ By the mid-1970s, 12 percent of New York City's inhabitants claimed Puerto Rican roots.¹²⁰

Puerto Rican migrants in the mid-20th century occupied the lower rungs of the U.S. labor market, taking jobs as domestic workers, in manufacturing, and in the service and maintenance industries.¹²¹ Generally, Puerto Ricans did not fare as well as other migrant groups. A 1976 report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights stated that within the Puerto Rican community on the mainland, the "incidence of poverty and unemployment ... is more severe than that of virtually any ethnic group in the United States."¹²² By the late 1960s and early 1970s, both New York-based Puerto Ricans and new migrants began moving out of New York City, which was hit hard by the recession. Large migrant populations settled in industrial Northeastern and Midwestern cities, including Philadelphia, Chicago, Gary (Indiana), Lorain (Ohio), Paterson



Hilda Hernandez of New York City (left), who emigrated from Puerto Rico, registers to vote in 1960. An unidentified man reviews registration materials.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

(New Jersey), and Hartford and Bridgeport (Connecticut). By the early 1970s, more than 30 U.S. cities had populations of more than 10,000 Puerto Ricans.¹²³

Puerto Rico's insular government contributed to this exchange of people and goods. Machines replaced men as the preferred form of labor on the island's sugar plantations, and Puerto Rico began hemorrhaging agricultural jobs. Its manufacturing industry struggled to compensate, and the island was left with catastrophic unemployment rates. With more workers than available work, island officials sought ways to alleviate the pressure on the island's economy. Invoking his medical training, Resident Commissioner Antonio Fernós-Isern sought policies for "a good emergency 'bloodletting,' scientifically carried out" to spark the economy. He hoped encouraging islanders to move to the mainland would help reduce what he called Puerto Rico's "hypertension."¹²⁴ Officials in New York noted that the new migrants were unprepared for life on the mainland; they spoke very little English and arrived with few job prospects.

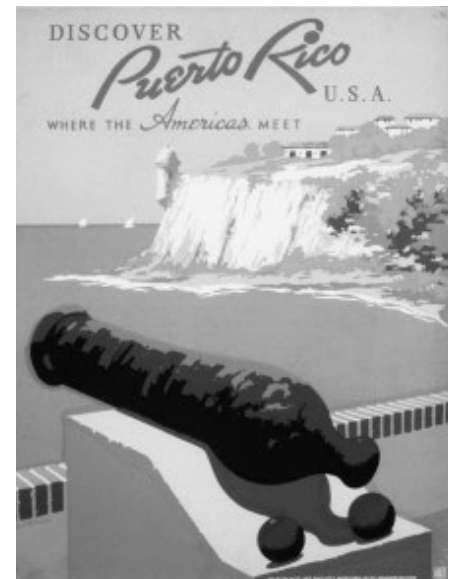
In 1947 Puerto Rican officials opened the Migration Office in response to these problems. (In 1951 the office became the Migration Division of the Puerto Rico department of labor.) The office served to recruit Puerto Rican labor for growing industries in the mainland United States, to regulate the flow of new migrants and help them find jobs, and to defend laborers from abuse.¹²⁵ One Puerto Rican cabinet official observed, "You cannot stop Puerto Rican people from coming to the United States, for they are citizens. They have been coming to New York City by themselves without Government aid in the past. We want to step in to give them some guidance about the housing, the weather and where they can find a job."¹²⁶

PPD officials lobbied for easy transportation between the island and the mainland, particularly on routes between New York and San Juan. Until the 1940s, steamships were the primary mode of transportation, but in the 1960s, jet-powered aircraft made the journey significantly easier. One San Juan-based commercial airline adopted the slogan, "Board Flight 55 and take a leap to New York," referencing both the flight number and the \$55 cost.¹²⁷ Through the efforts of Puerto Rican politicians, one-way air travel between the two cities dropped as low as \$35.¹²⁸ The effect of the migration and the rate of Puerto Rican political participation, especially in New York City, is the subject of some debate. Compared to African Americans—who also migrated in large numbers from the South to the industrial Northeast—and to other ethnic immigrant urban communities, Puerto Ricans lacked strong political motivations to leave Puerto Rico; their reasons for leaving were almost strictly economic. "European immigrants came to New York City hoping to become citizens, while Puerto Ricans came as migrant workers," writes historian James Jennings. Their sense of being temporary residents meant that they generally avoided politics. "Puerto Rican migrants did not perceive themselves as American citizens who could demand equal treatment before the law. These migrants saw themselves more as mere workers in someone else's country," Jennings states.¹²⁹ Indeed, cheap transportation enabled many Puerto Ricans to travel back and forth to the island, lessening the migrants' typical tendency to assimilate into their new neighborhoods. While several historians point to robust pre-World War II organizations that addressed broad community issues, other scholars are



Antonio Fernós-Isern, Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner to the U.S. Congress from 1946 to 1965, played a key role in winning commonwealth status for the island in the early 1950s. Fernós-Isern also advocated the movement of Puerto Ricans to the mainland United States.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



This poster from the late 1930s promoted Puerto Rico as a tourist destination for mainland U.S. citizens. In the decades after World War II, air travel made the island even more accessible, and opened up new possibilities for Puerto Ricans seeking to relocate in mainland cities such as New York.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Elected to the U.S. House in 1970, Herman Badillo of New York was the first person of Puerto Rican descent to serve as a full-fledged voting Representative.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Photography Collection

not convinced Puerto Rican migrants actively sought such political agency.¹³⁰ “Puerto Ricans generally thought they had little to gain in American politics,” said Bernardo Vega, a Puerto Rican critic who was based in New York during the early 20th century.¹³¹

Most historians agree that the major American political parties were slow to embrace Puerto Ricans as a constituency. “Neither of the two parties, not the Democratic nor the Republican, was seriously interested in the support of the Puerto Ricans,” Vega observed.¹³² Puerto Ricans’ earliest link to American politics was between its extreme Nationalist wing and the leftist American Labor Party. Represented most vocally by U.S. Congressman Vito Marcantonio—an American Labor Party member who represented East Harlem in the late 1930s and 1940s—New York-based Puerto Ricans developed a “troublesome” reputation that was unwelcome in the post–World War II, anti-communist, Cold War atmosphere.¹³³

The first generation of Puerto Rican politicians within the U.S. party system gained influence by using a measured approach, rising through the ranks and avoiding issues that were strictly Puerto Rican. Representative Badillo, for example, entered New York City politics through the reform wing of the Democratic Party, focusing on stemming corruption and promoting government efficiency. “Badillo’s political entree with this group therefore reflected a moderate orientation toward working in a middle-class, relatively mainstream context rather than a political identity limited to a Latino constituency,” writes historian Sherrie Bayer.¹³⁴ Though he addressed issues affecting Puerto Ricans in his district, Badillo distanced himself from El Barrio’s radical heritage. For example, he vocally opposed naming a Harlem public school after Pedro Albizu Campos, an activist for Puerto Rican independence who had endorsed terrorist activities in the 1930s.¹³⁵ Badillo also worried that federally funded antipoverty programs in New York City encouraged ethnic isolation rather than cooperation.¹³⁶

Before long, the civil rights movement revived a more radical Puerto Rican political community, especially in New York. The adoption of the *Estado Libre Asociado* (Free Associated State) in Puerto Rico in the early 1950s not only undercut the independence movement, but it also sparked renewed migration to the mainland, where urban industrialization had flourished after the war. Consequently, many leaders in and around Manhattan began addressing the economic needs of El Barrio and other popular Puerto Rican enclaves.¹³⁷ On the national level, the political mobilization of African Americans made the Democratic Party more amenable to minority interests, and by the 1960s Puerto Ricans, as people of color, confronted the notion of social justice.¹³⁸

Antecedents of the *Estado Libre Asociado* (ELA)

Throughout the early 1940s, congressional conservatism generally blocked any progress toward greater Puerto Rican autonomy.¹³⁹ During the Second World War, because of Puerto Rico’s strategic location at the entrance to the Caribbean Sea, Congress chose not to address the issue of the island’s relationship to the United States, whether as a territory, a state, or an independent country.¹⁴⁰ But after 1945, several developments encouraged officials to reconsider Puerto Rico’s status. The first, and perhaps the most influential, was a response to the political

and symbolic leadership of future governor Luis Muñoz Marín and his powerful political party, the PPD, which was formed in 1938. Muñoz Marín and the PPD promoted a moderate position of supporting an autonomous relationship with the United States instead of immediate independence.¹⁴¹ The economic success of Muñoz Marín's mid-1940s industrialization plan, dubbed "Operation Bootstrap," also fostered a growing belief on the mainland that Puerto Rico had reached a critical level of economic and political maturity.¹⁴² A second, equally powerful justification for revisiting the federal-insular relationship was the "international atmosphere of decolonization" that emerged after World War II.¹⁴³ Under pressure from the newly created United Nations, President Truman advocated self-determination and self-government for colonies, including Puerto Rico, as part of the "Four Points" in his 1949 inaugural address.¹⁴⁴

As early as 1943, the Puerto Rican legislature requested that islanders be permitted to elect their governor as the next step toward self-government. Muñoz Marín and his PPD ally Antonio Fernós-Isern sought this right as a step toward greater autonomy, and the move seemed appropriate after President Truman's appointment of the first native-born governor, Jesús Piñero, in 1946. The men's congressional allies—Chairman of the House Insular Affairs Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Possessions Fred Crawford of Michigan and Senator Hugh Butler of Nebraska—introduced a bill permitting the island's voters to elect their own governor in 1947. Reported favorably by committees in both houses, the Crawford–Butler Elected Governor Act (P.L. 80-362) passed with widespread bipartisan support in the final minutes of the first session of the 80th Congress (1947–1949).¹⁴⁵ The measure was the first major change to Puerto Rican governance since the Jones Act in 1917.¹⁴⁶ "Indeed," wrote a historian, "the climate in Congress for insular autonomy was remarkably favorable."¹⁴⁷

"In the Nature of a Compact": The Development of ELA

Despite the new legislation, the federal-insular relationship remained confusing and outdated. Attempts to tack a status referendum onto the Crawford–Butler Act failed before the bill came to the floor, but supporters used debate over the legislation to promote the idea of a "compact" between the United States and Puerto Rico.¹⁴⁸ Fernós-Isern outlined his views on this political relationship in an address at Princeton University on May 5, 1948, redefining Puerto Rico not as a state of the union or as an independent republic, but as an intermediate "Autonomous State" or a "Federated Republic."¹⁴⁹ A fixation on independence or statehood had created "worshippers of different sects," Fernós-Isern said the following October. He called on Puerto Ricans to unite, not as a colony but as a dominion of the United States, aligned with the mainland with regard to international matters but governed locally under its own constitution.¹⁵⁰

Historians credit Muñoz Marín and Fernós-Isern with navigating the autonomous option, which became the ELA, through treacherous political waters in Congress and Puerto Rico.¹⁵¹ Fernós-Isern, a physician, and Muñoz Marín, a writer, bonded over a "non-legalistic, non-doctrinaire approach" to Puerto Rico's status issues. In the Resident Commissioner's estimation, the key to shepherding a status change through Congress was to simplify the legislation.¹⁵²



President Harry Truman is greeted upon his arrival in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1948. Shaking Truman's hand is Jesús Piñero, governor of Puerto Rico; to Truman's immediate right is president of the insular senate and future governor Luis Muñoz Marín.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

Resident Commissioner Antonio Fernós-Isern, left, and Governor Luis Muñoz Marín, right, were key allies in the fight to achieve the Estado Libre Asociado (ELA). Puerto Rico's attorney general, Victor Gutierrez Franqui, is between the men.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



The two PPD leaders abandoned the aggressive tactics that were pursued in previous status fights; instead of attacking past U.S. policy toward its “shameful colony,” the two argued that Puerto Rico had earned the right to escape “centuries of poverty and injustice.”¹⁵³

Introduced on March 13, 1950, Fernós-Isern's 59-line bill (H.R. 7674) followed his simple, straightforward strategy.¹⁵⁴ “In the nature of a compact” between the United States and Puerto Rico, the bill authorized Puerto Ricans to conduct a plebiscite on the bill's basic provisions. If voters approved, the Puerto Rican legislature would call a constitutional convention to draft a document that would require popular consent before its submission to the U.S. Congress for final approval.¹⁵⁵ “This is not statehood,” Fernós-Isern explained to his colleagues. “Puerto Rico will continue to be represented in Congress by its Resident Commissioner. This is not independence. Puerto Ricans will continue proudly to be American citizens, in a common loyalty to our common institutions.... Mr. Chairman, I confidently say that the present political aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico are embodied in this bill.”¹⁵⁶

After sailing through committees in both chambers, the bill encountered minimal but vocal opposition on the House Floor. Representative Marcantonio of New York—a frequent advocate for independence who represented a large number of Harlem-based Puerto Ricans—argued vehemently against it, as did Jacob Javits, also of New York.¹⁵⁷ Marcantonio characterized the bill as “merely a snare and a delusion and a fraud perpetuated” on Puerto Ricans. “We are giving them nothing,” he declared. “This bill is a scheme to deprive the people of Puerto Rico to pass on their own future status.”¹⁵⁸ His parliamentary tactic—to remove the enacting clause and recommit the bill to the House Committee on Public Lands—failed spectacularly by vote of 260 to 1; Marcantonio's was the lone vote in its favor.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, most Members saw the PPD's overwhelming victory in the 1948 elections as a mandate for the bill and believed it recognized Puerto Rico's political maturity. House Public Lands Committee Ranking Member Fred Crawford described the bill as “a decided step forward toward human liberty and the right of a people to develop within themselves that responsibility which means freedom under the law.”¹⁶⁰ The final bill passed on a voice vote

in both chambers, becoming Public Law 600 after President Truman signed it on July 3, 1950.¹⁶¹ Fernós-Isern called on Puerto Ricans to unite with mainland Americans in observing “independence day” on the 4th of July.¹⁶² “The great victory in all this is not for any party,” he noted, “but for the entire people of Puerto Rico who after a whole generation have overcome their blindness.”¹⁶³ More than three-quarters (76.5 percent) of Puerto Ricans approved Public Law 600 in a plebiscite vote on June 4, 1951.¹⁶⁴

Fernós-Isern presided over the subsequent constitutional convention, but Muñoz Marín himself drafted the document’s preamble, which along with the first and second articles, was deemed a “value-oriented” provision, defining the island’s ideals and political culture.¹⁶⁵ The third, fourth, and fifth articles of the bill distributed power among the legislature, executive branch, and judicial system.¹⁶⁶ The convention overwhelmingly approved a final draft, 88 to 3, on February 5, 1952.¹⁶⁷

Section 20 of the constitution contained a bill of rights that extended beyond the U.S. Constitution’s. Borrowed from the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it protected the right to work, a standard of living “adequate for health and well-being,” social services, and special care for women and children.¹⁶⁸ “The Constitution contains a comprehensive Bill of Rights which not only incorporates the traditional American guarantees to the individual, but also reflects recent advances in respect to social and economic matters,” Fernós-Isern explained. “With respect to the latter, however, it is worth noting that the Constitution carefully adapts its statement of social and economic rights to the realities of the Puerto Rican situation,” he said.¹⁶⁹ Fernós-Isern counted on the Puerto Rican electorate’s ability to create and amend its own constitution to justify the island’s new status with no interference from Congress beyond its assurance that the document was within the parameters of U.S. law.¹⁷⁰ Puerto Rican voters approved the constitution by a margin of more than 4 to 1 in a plebiscite on March 3, 1952.¹⁷¹

The meaning of Puerto Rican sovereignty and Congress’s future role on the island became the focus of debate in the U.S. House during the 82nd Congress (1951–1953). Given that congressional oversight was limited to ensuring that the Puerto Rican constitution fit the parameters of Public Law 600, the objectives were to create a republican government, include a bill of rights, and attain majority approval by the Puerto Rican people before submitting the document to Congress and the President for final approval.¹⁷² It was unclear whether Congress could amend articles it deemed unacceptable, but both houses soon took this approach over Fernós-Isern’s objections.¹⁷³

The House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee unanimously supported the constitution, reporting H.J. Res. 430 without amendment on April 30, 1952, but Chairman John Murdock of Arizona noted “a good deal of opposition” to Section 20 because the committee believed it was too socialistic, and he encouraged its removal.¹⁷⁴ The debate centered on the ideological intention behind, the legality of, and the acceptance of the extensive bill of rights. Support was not split along partisan lines.¹⁷⁵ Members against amending argued that Congress could only ensure the constitution met the requirements of Public Law 600 and that amending it or weighing in on policy would renege on the



Vito Marcantonio of New York, whose district included Puerto Rican neighborhoods in Harlem, favored complete independence for the island rather than commonwealth status.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Fred L. Crawford, Ranking Member of the House Public Lands Committee, described the bill permitting Puerto Ricans the right to draft a constitution under commonwealth status as “a decided step forward toward human liberty.”

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

President-elect John Kennedy and Puerto Rican Governor Luis Muñoz Marín met in Washington, D.C., in January 1961.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



agreement established by the law.¹⁷⁶ “Our enactment of Public Law 600 has no meaning unless it means that we entrusted the people of Puerto Rico the responsibility of writing law on which their government is to [be] based,” noted Lloyd Bentsen of Texas. Bentsen recognized that the statement in Section 20 represented the “goals toward which Puerto Rico intends to work.”¹⁷⁷ One of the bill’s most vocal allies, Representative Reva Bosone of Utah, was the first to note that passage would profoundly shape future U.S. relations with Latin America. “I have always thought that probably our best friends were and would be the South American countries,” Bosone said. “I am convinced ... that our tie, our link with South America is Puerto Rico.... In my opinion it would be wrong not to pass this constitution, and the effect of it would be tremendous on our good will and saving face in the confidence of the Puerto Rican people. All of this will in turn be reflected in our relationship with South America.”¹⁷⁸

Though Cold War rhetoric provided a strong rationale to pass the constitution, it also drove the desire to strike Section 20. Insular Affairs Committee Chairman Murdock eventually submitted an amendment to delete this portion of the bill of rights.¹⁷⁹ Supporters included Republican Representative John Wood of Idaho, who called “this strange bill of rights” an “entirely unworkable thing in our form of society.”¹⁸⁰ Most Members who spoke favored Murdock’s amendment, which passed on voice vote, and argued that Congress’s right to reject the constitution extended to rejecting portions of it.¹⁸¹

The Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs upheld the House amendment in its report on S.J. Res. 151. South Carolina Senator Olin Johnston’s attempt to assert absolute congressional authority to approve or reject the Puerto Rican constitutional amendment under the ELA provoked a sharp exchange with Dennis Chavez of New Mexico.¹⁸² But the amendment, which some observers described as a “poison pill,” passed by voice vote.¹⁸³ The House-Senate conference committee deleted the Johnston amendment, but in doing so also struck Section 20. Furthermore, any additional amendments could not alter the arrangements made under Public Law 600 and the remainder of the Jones Act.¹⁸⁴



Representative Reva Bosone of Utah favored granting Puerto Rico greater autonomy in crafting its constitution in the early 1950s. Bosone reasoned that such a policy would promote stronger ties between the United States and the island and, by extension, South American nations.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Photography Collection

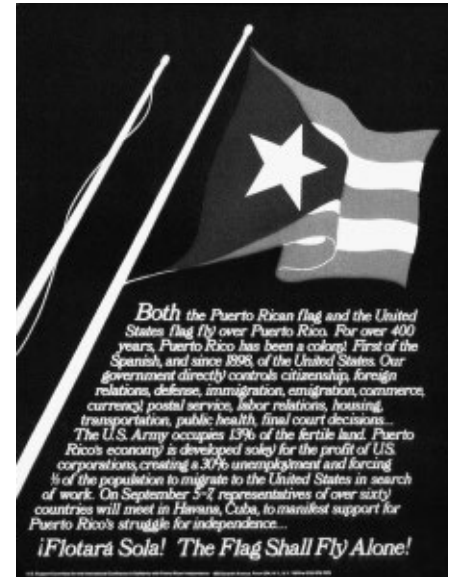
To Fernós-Isern, the final measure represented a significant victory and proved that the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States was a balanced “compact.” Congress still maintained ultimate oversight over Puerto Rico’s internal affairs, and with the Jones Act in place, the final law created a “moral” compact between Puerto Rico and the United States rather than fundamentally altering their legal relationship.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, Fernós-Isern’s strategy had achieved a resolution to the status issue, which many Puerto Ricans had sought for half a century.¹⁸⁶ With President Truman’s signature, the ELA took effect July 25, 1952, the anniversary of the American invasion of Puerto Rico in the Spanish-American War.¹⁸⁷ Fernós-Isern and Muñoz Marín joined 35,000 people in front of the capitol in San Juan to raise the new flag, which boasted five red and white vertical stripes with a single white star in a blue triangle, a design that Puerto Rican revolutionaries had hoisted against Spain in 1895.¹⁸⁸

Reactions to the ELA

International reaction to the ELA’s passage did not disappoint its supporters. In May 1952, the Organization of American States’ publication arm, *Americas*, observed that the new Puerto Rican constitution “enhance[d] the international prestige of the United States as the defender of democracy, for under the island’s new status even an opportunistic political or a local poet could hardly call Puerto Ricans ‘colonials.’”¹⁸⁹ The U.S. delegation to the United Nations, which included Fernós-Isern, reported in 1953 that Puerto Rico was now a self-governing territory. Fernós-Isern convinced the UN General Assembly to pass Resolution 748, relieving the United States from reporting on Puerto Rico’s decolonization efforts.¹⁹⁰ While serving in Congress, Fernós-Isern also celebrated subsequent ELA anniversaries, praising Puerto Rican progress under the new political structure. “The people of Puerto Rico have proved they are politically mature,” he reported in 1954. “They are not going to be stampeded into suicide and jump through the separatist window into the turmoil of today’s international struggle, nor will they break their backs trying to carry burdens and assume financial responsibilities for which they lack the necessary strength.”¹⁹¹

Yet support for the ELA was far from universal. Detractors noted that the underlying status structure remained unchanged; Puerto Rico was still a U.S. territory. “The Congress of the United States ... agreed to accept the Commonwealth status on the understanding that the phrase ‘in the nature of a compact’ did not mean that Congress was irrevocably giving up its jurisdiction over Puerto Rican matters, internal and external,” historian Surendra Bhana concludes.¹⁹² The ELA faced several court challenges in the late 20th century.¹⁹³

The honeymoon period that followed the adoption of the ELA barely lasted into the next decade. As early as 1959, Fernós-Isern, under pressure from statehood advocates in Puerto Rico, introduced H.R. 9234, popularly known as the Fernós–Murray Bill, to clarify the intent of Public Law 600. The measure died in committee, but within the next five years Fernós-Isern served on a congressionally established commission to study the future relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico.¹⁹⁴ The commission’s findings concluded



A poster, depicting the Puerto Rican flag in the decades after commonwealth status was granted, supports complete Puerto Rican independence. Alluding to a century of U.S. rule in Puerto Rico, it also declares that one day the Puerto Rican flag shall fly alone.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Jaime Benítez, who served as Resident Commissioner from 1973 to 1977, remained a steadfast supporter of commonwealth status despite continued widespread disagreement among the Puerto Rican populace.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

that three alternatives—statehood, commonwealth, and independence—were viable. The results, announced in 1966, sparked a plebiscite on July 23, 1967, wherein a relatively low turnout of voters chose to continue under the auspices of the ELA.¹⁹⁵ Given the pro-commonwealth results, pro-statehood Resident Commissioner Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz, who won office in 1968, estimated that building enough support for statehood to convince Congress to act would take 25 more years. “The time is not yet ripe [for statehood],” he said in 1970, “but surely it is coming when the great preponderance of our people will clearly express its will in this sense.”¹⁹⁶ Future Resident Commissioner Jaime Benítez continued to support commonwealth status. “I believe that the immense majority of my fellow Puerto Ricans are now and will continue to be as far as one may foresee into the future spiritually committed, soberly and progressively so, in spite of intervening confusions, exasperations, difficulties, and misunderstandings, to permanent association and union with the U.S,” he said in 1968. The key feature of the island’s status, he reiterated, was its flexibility as a “middle of the road approach.”¹⁹⁷ The idea of statehood, he said later, was “unmitigated nonsense.”¹⁹⁸ Benítez defeated the incumbent, Córdova-Díaz, as the PPD’s candidate for Resident Commissioner in 1972, indicating that after 20 years, status remained one of the most contentious issues on the island.

The Nationalists and the ELA

The most vocal and violent detractors of Public Law 600 and the ELA was the Partido Nacionalista (Nationalist Party). As early as the fall of 1950, radical Nacionalistas launched two attacks in Puerto Rico: On October 27, they led an armed uprising in at least seven Puerto Rican towns; three days later, they attempted to assassinate Muñoz Marín at the governor’s mansion in San Juan. A total of 33 Nacionalistas died.¹⁹⁹

Nacionalistas also struck in Washington during the debate on Public Law 600. On November 1, 1950, New York-based Puerto Rican Nacionalistas attacked Blair House, President Truman’s temporary home on Lafayette Square, across from the White House. Though the President was unharmed, one of the two assassins and a White House police officer were killed. Resident Commissioner Fernós-Isern condemned the attack as the work of a small, extremist minority and was quick to distance Puerto Rico from the violence. “I am a physician. Perhaps I might find in the intricacies of psychiatry an explanation for this type of behavior and for the reasoning or lack of reasoning behind it,” he told his colleagues on the House Floor. “But outside of that, I can say this: Thank God this type of behavior and reasoning is not typical of the people of Puerto Rico.”²⁰⁰ He linked the violent wing of the Partido Nacionalista with “traitorous” United States communists in an “unholy marriage.”²⁰¹ In a visit to the White House on November 17, Fernós-Isern delivered a letter to President Truman expressing the regrets of the Puerto Rican people.²⁰² After the remaining assassin was sentenced to execution, Fernós-Isern delivered a letter that was signed by 119,000 Puerto Ricans who were thankful the President had been spared. Weighing 57 pounds, the letter denounced the “arbitrary act of violence ... by a small group of fanatic Nationalists.”²⁰³

On March 1, 1954, Nacionalista extremists struck the U.S. Congress. Three armed men and one woman posing as journalists sprayed the House Chamber with gunfire from the southwest corner of the public galleries. At least 243 Members of Congress and many staff members, in the middle of a vote on Mexican farm labor legislation, dove for cover under chairs or tables and behind the rostrum. Five Members were wounded, two seriously. Fernós-Isern, who was a trained doctor and was in his office during the shooting because he couldn't vote, ran toward the Capitol after hearing about the attack to see if he could help the medical personnel. Capitol Police stopped him for security reasons, confining him to his office on the seventh floor of the New (Longworth) House Office Building.²⁰⁴ Fernós-Isern denounced the shooters the same way he had denounced Truman's would-be assassins and accused Puerto Ricans in New York of being "communist dupes." The shooters "are certainly out of touch with the political situation in Puerto Rico," he said.²⁰⁵ "Can it be the doing just of Puerto Rican Nationalists?" he asked a *Baltimore Sun* journalist rhetorically. "Who benefits? Certainly not Puerto Rico."²⁰⁶



On March 1, 1954, Puerto Rican nationalists attacked the U.S. Capitol, raining gunfire onto the House Floor from the public galleries. Five Representatives were injured in the fusillade. Suspects Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, and Andrés Figueroa Cordero are led away shortly after being detained by Capitol Police and bystanders.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Governor Muñoz Marín also flew to Washington on March 2 to express his condolences. The governor visited all the wounded Congressmen, except Michigan Representative Alvin Bentley, who was unable to receive visitors, and called on President Eisenhower at the White House.²⁰⁷ Later Muñoz Marín stood in the well of the House, shook hands with Members, and received a standing ovation. Speaker Joe Martin of Massachusetts, who had ducked behind the rostrum to avoid the rampage, voiced his support for the Puerto Rican government. "A few gangsters can't break up the friendship of great nations," he said.²⁰⁸

Changes in the Role of the Resident Commissioner

Puerto Rico's evolution from territory to commonwealth resulted in some changes to the role of the Resident Commissioner. Prior to World War II, the Resident Commissioner's role consisted largely of securing funding and resources while working to acquire greater autonomy under the Jones



Resident Commissioner Antonio Fernós-Isern (center) and Governor Luis Muñoz Marín (left) extend their sympathy to House Speaker Joseph Martin of Massachusetts (right) after radical Puerto Rican nationalists attacked Members in the House Chamber in 1954.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

Act of 1917. Resident Commissioners functioned as foreign ambassadors, congressional legislators, lobbyists, and publicity agents for Puerto Rican tourism and industry.²⁰⁹ Jesús Piñero's brief tenure as Resident Commissioner during the 79th Congress (1945–1947) exemplifies the multiple roles of the office. Both Piñero and his successor, Antonio Fernós-Isern, worked closely with PPD leader Luis Muñoz Marín to improve Puerto Rico's economic situation by acquiring federal aid and attracting investment capital to the island. The two also worked to obtain airline routes between Puerto Rico and the mainland United States and spoke for and represented Puerto Rico on the mainland.

While the passage of Public Law 600 did not legally change the duties or privileges of the Resident Commissioner, scholar José Ríos notes that the Resident Commissioner assumed two additional obligations under the new Puerto Rican constitution: the “legal obligation to insure that Congress did not approve legislation that could be in conflict with the status of the Commonwealth” and “the obligation to support those changes in the association with the United States that the people of Puerto Rico should propose.”²¹⁰ Fernós-Isern, with the support of Senator James Murray of Montana, tried to enhance the Resident Commissioner's role as an ambassador to the executive branch, among other things, by sponsoring H.R. 9234 during the 86th Congress (1959–1961), but the bill never passed.²¹¹ Greater autonomy for Puerto Rico also meant that the other elective offices, including those of the governor and the insular legislature, took on increased stature in Puerto Rico. For example, when the speaker of the insular house, Santiago Polanco-Abreu, was handpicked by Muñoz Marín as the PPD candidate for Resident Commissioner, many of his supporters viewed his selection as a career step backward and akin to “political exile” because it isolated him from the party during a crucial transition period.²¹² But with the U.S. Congress expected to tackle the question of Puerto Rico's status, others believed the Resident Commissioner's job was more important than ever.²¹³

Expanding the Rights of Territorial Delegates and the Resident Commissioner

During this period, Territorial Delegates often joined the Resident Commissioner to address issues common to their constituents. In the 1950s, Delegates Joseph Farrington of Hawaii and Bob Bartlett of Alaska, along with Resident Commissioner Fernós-Isern, formed an informal caucus they jokingly called the “three cadets.” “We compared notes and exchanged ideas. We understood each other, and I think we understood each other's problems,” Fernós-Isern noted.²¹⁴ On April 10, 1972, Congress passed H.R. 8787 (P.L. 92-271), creating positions for Delegates to represent Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the House starting in the 93rd Congress (1973–1975).²¹⁵ While lobbying for the position he eventually won, Ron de Lugo mirrored the argument put forth by Fernós-Isern with the passage of the ELA. “Let me make it perfectly clear that we in the Virgin Islands do not seek independence, nor do we by urging passage of H.R. 8787 seek statehood,” de Lugo told the Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs. “We seek only, in a limited

way, a voice to articulate the needs of the people of the Virgin Islands within the framework of the national legislature.”²¹⁶ De Lugo’s strategy of testifying before House and Senate subcommittees and committees was one that was often used by Resident Commissioners to discuss economic and political needs, and to attempt to eliminate some of the bureaucracy from Congress’s territorial governance.

The growing number of statutory representatives made great strides in obtaining more rights within the legislative process. Political tremors in Puerto Rico during the late 1960s sent shock waves from San Juan to Washington. For nearly 20 years, the PPD, which was responsible for creating and nurturing the island’s commonwealth status, remained virtually unchallenged. The pro-commonwealth plebiscite in 1967 seemed to reaffirm the island’s confidence in the Popular Democrats and to solidify Puerto Rico’s unique relationship with the federal government. But less than a year later, the PPD lost elections islandwide to the upstart, pro-statehood Partido Nuevo Progresista (New Progressive Party, or PNP). Social ills like poverty, crime, and corruption hurt the PPD’s popularity, and the new PNP administration provided an ambitious, new agenda that included statehood. “The depth and desire for change in the Puerto Rican electorate was underestimated by all the politicians,” said an editorial in San Juan’s leading English-language newspaper shortly after the election.²¹⁷

The Puerto Rican electorate’s “desire for change” extended the duties and responsibilities of the Resident Commissioner, which had been a talking point during the 1968 campaign for the office. Until that point, the Resident Commissioner’s role in the House had been unique. The Resident Commissioner sat on committees whose jurisdictions affected Puerto Rico, but could not gain seniority or vote during markup. He could introduce legislation on the House Floor but was unable to vote on its final passage. Thus, the office of the Resident Commissioner often functioned more like a lobbying operation than a seat in the national legislature.²¹⁸ For nearly a generation, this arrangement satisfied the PPD’s commonwealth program; Puerto Ricans maintained U.S. citizenship, their cultural identity, and a degree of independence in exchange for a muted role in federal politics.

But such thinking began to change with the retirement of the initial group of PPD leaders. Amid the rise of the pro-statehood PNP in the late 1960s, many voters reassessed their expectations for the office of Resident Commissioner. Whereas the PPD tended to concern itself only with legislation that might influence Puerto Rico’s commonwealth status, the PNP promised to refashion the Resident Commissioner’s seat.²¹⁹ When Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz won election in 1968, he set in motion a series of events that made the office of Resident Commissioner significantly more influential.

Like earlier Resident Commissioners, Córdova-Díaz lamented his nonvoting status. “I can sit in the chamber and have my colleagues tell me how lucky I am not to have to vote on a controversial issue,” he said in 1970. “But I itch to vote. I don’t have any political muscle.” It all made “getting even the smallest of things” for Puerto Rico difficult, not to mention larger items, such as food stamps, which he struggled to procure.²²⁰ Córdova-Díaz considered the office



Delegate Ron de Lugo of the Virgin Islands, in pressing for greater representation for his territory in Congress, employed many of the same arguments as Resident Commissioners had for Puerto Rico.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Carl Albert of Oklahoma was Speaker of the House when the chamber adopted new rules that expanded the powers of Delegates and Resident Commissioners.

Carl Albert, Charles B. Wilson, 1973, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

of Resident Commissioner to be unequal to representing nearly three million people.²²¹ Even future Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma conceded, “I think it is important to note that the role of Resident Commissioner is unique in the Congress. The man who serves in this capacity must find his own way among men and women whose status is rather different and in many ways easier.”²²²

Córdova-Díaz offered an amendment as part of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-510) that permitted the Resident Commissioner to vote in committee. Córdova-Díaz was certain the amendment would fail in the Senate. “I can’t complain that I’ve been ignored,” he said after the bill passed the House, “but I feel if the bill is passed [by the Senate] the chances are better that I’ll be listened to. These department heads are well aware that I haven’t had the vote and now they’ll realize that someday they might need me. So I feel they’ll be more responsive when I ask them for something.”²²³ When the amendment unexpectedly cleared the Senate, the office of Resident Commissioner assumed more direct power than ever before.²²⁴ On the Opening Day of the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), the House implemented the rights that were won by Córdova-Díaz, declaring that statutory Members would “serve on standing committees in the same manner as Members of the House” and would have the right to accrue seniority.²²⁵ Statutory representatives intended to continue to try to obtain more rights in Congress, especially the right to vote on the House Floor. Asked about full voting rights for Delegates on the House Floor, de Lugo responded, “The fact that I’m here shows you how far we’ve come.”²²⁶

HISPANIC AMERICANS IN CONGRESS AND THE COLD WAR

The pressure to live up to the rhetoric about spreading democratic principles abroad increased during the Cold War, and the defense of human rights was an even larger concern for the Harry S. Truman administration. According to one scholar, President Truman shared three goals with later Cold War Presidents: countering Soviet propaganda about U.S. hypocrisy regarding racial equality; convincing nonaligned nations in Africa, Latin America, and Asia of the United States’ belief in racial egalitarianism; and leveraging the civil rights movement to enact domestic reforms.²²⁷

With the escalation of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Hispanic-American Members of Congress pursued their legislative interests in an era of decolonization abroad, anti-communist sentiment at home, and conflicts designed to contain communist expansion in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Senator Dennis Chavez held a particularly powerful position early in the Cold War era; as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense in the late 1950s, Chavez wielded great influence over the Eisenhower administration’s defense spending. He opposed the President’s attempt to cut national security outlays with the New Look program and viewed any reduction in the country’s military preparedness as unwise in the wake of the inconclusive resolution of the Korean War in 1953.²²⁸ Military buildups were the foundation for Chavez’s domestic Cold War agenda, and he believed no amount of money was too great for national security. His New Mexico constituency benefited greatly from the arms race.

The country's sophisticated military infrastructure created new jobs, which Chavez directed to the Southwest.²²⁹

Chavez's anti-communism had its limits, however, and he resented the state of public discourse in the early 1950s. As the Senate investigated accusations by Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin that communists had infiltrated the State Department, Chavez tried to reorient the chamber's moral—and constitutional—compass. He was one of McCarthy's earliest critics. At great personal risk, Chavez spoke out against McCarthy's accusations, telling the Senate he felt obligated to "step out and sound the alarm."²³⁰ The rampant claims of treason, most without substantive evidence, noted New Mexico's Senator, "[bred] hysteria and confusion—a course so dangerous that few dare to oppose the drift lest they be the next marked for destruction."²³¹

But anti-communist rhetoric cut both ways. During his 1962 House campaign, Joseph Montoya outlined his hard-line bona fides and the value of his seat on the House Appropriations Committee. In a speech to constituents, he reminded voters that he "consistently voted against seating Communist China in the United Nations" and "supported the authorization of funds to carry on the work of the House Un-American Activities Committee." He adamantly opposed aid to countries like India, which remained neutral in the struggle between the superpowers; supported anti-communist authoritarian regimes abroad; and sought to strengthen U.S. ties with Latin America. When reactionaries at home accused Montoya of harboring communist sympathies, he pointed to his foreign policy commitments abroad as evidence to the contrary.²³²

Hispanic politicians had varied responses to the Vietnam War. Those who were initially patient became vehemently critical by the time President Richard Nixon assumed control. In 1971 Montoya submitted an amendment seeking the immediate withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam. In May of the same year, Edward Roybal joined a lawsuit with 27 other Democratic lawmakers demanding an immediate end to the war. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Roybal's affidavit was one of 15 filed in U.S. district court proclaiming "that military appropriations and authorization bills should not be taken as a form of war declaration."²³³ Herman Badillo, who also entered Congress in 1971,



Dennis Chavez of New Mexico was one of a handful of U.S. Senators who denounced the tactics of their red-baiting, anticommunist colleague Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin—pictured at the right of the photo. The full Senate eventually censured McCarthy for abusing his powers and bringing the Senate into "dishonor and disrepute."

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Cuban refugees in New York City watch President John Kennedy's televised October 1962 speech in which he announces a naval "quarantine" of the island during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Cold War conflicts in Latin America created new waves of immigrants to the U.S. and increasingly diverse Latino communities.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

made no secret of his opposition to the Vietnam War, publicly criticizing the Nixon administration's approach to ending the conflict and supporting many of the antiwar amendments and bills considered by the House. "We ... should be reasserting the responsibility of Congress to shape our foreign and military policy by bringing the war to an end—now," he said.²³⁴ Kika de la Garza had a different opinion. He described public antiwar demonstrations as an "insult to our servicemen and their families" and "a continuing attempt to wreck the American Government and to bring anarchy to our country."²³⁵ As the representative of a district that sent a significant number of constituents



to fight in the war, de la Garza supported the Nixon administration's strategy for a gradual withdrawal from Vietnam. "If you become involved in a military conflict you go out and win, using all the resources at your command," he said, describing his support for the President as a patriotic duty.²³⁶

The Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners had a range of opinions concerning the struggle against communism. While rector of the Universidad de Puerto Rico from 1941 to 1966, future Resident Commissioner Jaime Benítez omitted political affiliation from the hiring process to ensure academic freedom.²³⁷ As a result, he frequently risked his own reputation to protect professors from charges of communism by insular and federal authorities.²³⁸ In March 1966, Resident Commissioner Santiago Polanco-Abreu submitted a concurrent resolution expressing the Puerto Rican legislature's support for the Vietnam War. Polanco-Abreu said the resolution "condemns all actions tending to weaken the efforts of the United States in its struggle to preserve peace and democratic justice in the world, as now in Vietnam, and to check Communist aggression."²³⁹ His successor, Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz, made no remarks about the Vietnam War on the House Floor, but he publicly disputed Herman Badillo's contention that a disproportionate number of Puerto Ricans had served in Vietnam.²⁴⁰

THE FOUNDING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS

On December 8, 1976, Representatives Badillo, González, de la Garza, and Roybal and Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner-elect Baltasar Corrada-del Río announced the formation of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC).²⁴¹ While several of the founding Members had served in Congress since the 1960s, they had not formed a group to focus on issues that were important to Hispanic Americans. Since 1971, Badillo had urged the creation of a Hispanic Caucus to foster greater unity among the Hispanic Members.²⁴² The founders of the CHC stated that their mission was “to develop programs ... to increase opportunities for Hispanics to participate in and contribute to the American political system” and to “reverse the national pattern of neglect, exclusion and indifference suffered for decades by Spanish-speaking citizens of the U.S.”²⁴³ “The fact that we have joined together is a sign of the growing power of our community, and we are looking forward to strengthening the Federal commitment to Hispanic citizens,” the caucus declared.²⁴⁴ Roybal was the CHC’s first chairman. For reasons that were not specified, Representative Luján and outgoing Resident Commissioner Benítez, as well as Delegate de Lugo, did not join the caucus.

CONCLUSION

From the end of World War II to the mid-1970s, Hispanic-American Members of Congress faced momentous changes outside the institution. They responded by emphasizing the improvement of national conditions over local and regional interests. As local civil rights organizations in the Southwest and the Northeast organized, gaining influence and challenging discriminatory practices, Hispanic-American Members continued to serve their constituents by acquiring resources, promoting legislation, and learning institutional mores so as to become more powerful and effective legislators. As middle- and working-class Mexican Americans mobilized to challenge discrimination during the civil rights era, some Mexican-American Members of Congress used their influence to push through civil rights legislation and lobbied the Kennedy and Johnson administrations on behalf of their constituents. By the late 1960s, dissatisfaction with the uneven progress of the civil rights movement prompted a more confrontational stance that demanded immediate social benefits in exchange for political support.

Despite divisions regarding tactics, Hispanic-American Members began to promote the legislative interests that were common to Mexican-American and Puerto Rican civil rights activists. The elimination by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (and its various extensions) of many legalistic barriers to voting and political participation set the stage for an increase in the number of Hispanic-American Members, with an enhanced ability to gain access to important committees, acquire seniority, and serve as chairmen or Ranking Members or within party leadership. Ideological differences and disagreements over policy sometimes proved divisive, but as Hispanic-American Members acquired more institutional power, their often similar legislative interests enabled them to work toward common goals as members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (23 June 1952): 7842, 7846; A. W. Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution* (San Juan: La Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2006): 318–319, 322.
- 2 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (23 June 1952): 7846.
- 3 Quoted in Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 321–322; David M. Helfeld, “Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600 and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,” *Revista jurídica de la Universidad de Puerto Rico* 21, no. 4 (May–June 1952): 299, 302; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (23 June 1952): 7841, 7846. Chavez was reacting to remarks by Senator Olin Johnston of South Carolina who said, “We have received nothing from Puerto Rico in return for all we have given them, all the millions of dollars that we have spent in Puerto Rico. We have asked for nothing in return in the form of taxes or anything else.... In relation to the Constitution of Puerto Rico I can say that we can give them a constitution or not give it to them: I want the Puerto Ricans to know this.”
- 4 Rodolfo Espino III, “Political Representation,” in Suzanne Oboler and Deena J. González, eds., *The Oxford History of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 424–431.
- 5 Ignacio García, “La Raza Unida Party,” in Oboler and González, eds., *The Oxford History of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 2: 473–475.
- 6 Walter S. Priest, “What Lies Ahead for Polanco?” 15 November 1964, *San Juan Star*: 3.
- 7 Overall, Hispanic-American Representatives were about the same age as their congressional counterparts (43.4 years), but the average age of the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners when they were first elected was considerably older (55.8 years). See Allan G. Bogue et al., “Members of the House of Representatives and the Processes of Modernization, 1789–1960,” *Journal of American History* 63, no. 2 (September 1976): 291 (see especially Table 6). This figure includes Joseph Montoya of New Mexico, who served in the House from 1957 to 1964 and in the Senate from 1964 to 1976.
- 8 Córdova-Díaz was not a member of the PPD; he was a member of the Partido Acción Cristiana (Christian Action Party) and the Partido Nuevo Progresista (New Progressive Party).
- 9 Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz was appointed to serve on the bench of the supreme court of Puerto Rico. He did not serve as a legislator until he was elected Resident Commissioner in 1968.
- 10 From 1940 to 1950, 50.7 percent of House Members were lawyers; from 1950 to 1960, 52 percent practiced law. See Bogue et al., “Members of the House of Representatives and the Processes of Modernization, 1789–1960”: 284 (especially Table 2). It is unclear whether Ron de Lugo attended college.
- 11 Herman Badillo was initially assigned to the Committee on Agriculture, but lobbied for, and got a spot on the Education and Labor Committee with the support of the Democratic Study Group and Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma.
- 12 Ralph Nader Congress Project, *Citizens Look at Congress: Jorge L. Córdova, Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico* (Washington, D.C.: Grossman Publishers, 1972). Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz caucused with the Republican Party during the second half of his term of service in the House.
- 13 William R. Tansill, “The Resident Commissioner to the United States from Puerto Rico: An Historical Perspective,” *Revista jurídica de la Universidad de Puerto Rico*, 47, nos. 1–2 (1978): 83.
- 14 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1964): 23426.
- 15 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (7 August 1972): 27010. Interestingly, Montoya does not list Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz, the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner, or Ron de Lugo, the Delegate for the Virgin Islands, who were nonvoting Members of the House.
- 16 Juan Gómez-Quifones, *Chicano Politics, Reality and Promise, 1940–1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990): 94–95.

- 17 Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 259–260; Surendra Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1975): 103–104; *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1952): 6169.
- 18 “Candidate’s Stand on Issues,” n.d., 1962 file,” Box 64, Folder 1 (MSS 386 BC), Joseph M. Montoya Papers, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research, Albuquerque (hereinafter referred to as Montoya Papers, CSWR).
- 19 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (18 December 1969): 39945.
- 20 *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (16 December 1969): 39400–39401.
- 21 *Congressional Record*, Index, 91st Cong.: 1579; “An Act to Establish the Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish-Speaking People, and for Other Purposes,” P.L. 91-181, 83 Stat. 838, 1969–1970.
- 22 Ralph Nader Congress Project, *Citizens Look at Congress: Manuel Luján, Jr.* (Washington, D.C.: Grossman Publishers, 1972): 8.
- 23 *Politics in America, 1982* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1981): 791; “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present” <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 24 See, for example, Badillo’s stance on unemployment, *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (2 March 1972): 6689–6690.
- 25 *Congressional Record*, House, Extension of Remarks, 92nd Cong, 1st sess. (4 June 1971): 18267.
- 26 “Latin Parley Is Called by Four from Congress,” 26 September 1971, *New York Times*: 77.
- 27 Will Lissner, “Coalition Sought by Puerto Ricans,” 30 September 1971, *New York Times*: 43; Jack Rosenthal, “U.S. Latins Vote Political Drive,” 25 October 1971, *New York Times*: 17.
- 28 Thomas J. Foley, “‘Brown Power’ Parley Opens This Weekend,” 22 October 1971, *Los Angeles Times*: A18.
- 29 Jack Rosenthal, “Latin Americans Sue U.S. on Rights,” 23 October 1971, *New York Times*: 31; “Hispanic-Americans Complain about Frequent Police Abuses,” 24 October 1971, *Chicago Tribune*: A22.
- 30 Rosenthal, “U.S. Latins Vote Political Drive.”
- 31 Nicholas De Genova, “Immigration Policy, Twentieth Century,” in Oboler and González, eds., *The Oxford History of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 2: 353.
- 32 Manuel Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009): 123.
- 33 Kunal M. Parker, “Citizenship and Immigration Law, 1800–1824: Resolution of Membership and Territory,” in Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins, eds., *The Cambridge History of Law in America: The Long Nineteenth Century (1789–1920)*, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 197–199.
- 34 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 122–123.
- 35 David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987): 182.
- 36 Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*: 190; Harvey A. Levenstein, “The AFL and Mexican Immigration in the 1920s: An Experiment in Labor Diplomacy,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 48, no. 2 (May 1968): 206–219.
- 37 Parker, “Citizenship and Immigration Law, 1800–1924,” in Grossberg and Tomlins, *The Cambridge History of Law in America*, vol. 2: 200; Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*: 187–188.
- 38 Parker, “Citizenship and Immigration Law, 1800–1924,” in Grossberg and Tomlins, *The Cambridge History of Law in America*, vol. 2: 200.
- 39 George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 96.

- 40 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*: 105.
- 41 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 121–122; Juan Gómez-Quíñones, *Roots of Chicano Politics, 1600–1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994): 297–301; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004): 129–130.
- 42 Richard Steele, “Mexican Americans in the 1940s: Perceptions and Conditions,” in Richard Griswold del Castillo, ed., *World War II and Mexican American Civil Rights* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008): 9–17; Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 113–125, 163–168. Like New Mexico, California sought to guarantee Hispanics’ civil rights in the 19th century through the 1879 state constitution, but Hispanics’ political power declined throughout the 1870s. The quotation is from Gómez-Quíñones, *Roots of Chicano Politics, 1600–1940*: 295–296.
- 43 For a detailed description of the formation of these groups, see Gómez-Quíñones, *Roots of Chicano Politics, 1600–1940*: 311–318.
- 44 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 140–142. Gonzales notes that Los Angeles had “97,116 Mexicanos living within its city limits.”
- 45 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*: 211.
- 46 Ibid., 212–213.
- 47 Ibid., 213–214.
- 48 Victor C. Romero, “Deportation Cases and Legislation,” in Oboler and González, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 1: 496.
- 49 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 148.
- 50 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*: 217.
- 51 Ibid., 220.
- 52 Benjamin Marquez, *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993): 17–34; Richard Steele, “The Federal Government Discovers Mexican Americans,” in Griswold del Castillo, ed., *World War II and Mexican American Civil Rights*: 23–31; Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 40–41.
- 53 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 163–164; Steele, “The Federal Government Discovers Mexican Americans,” in Griswold del Castillo, ed., *World War II and Mexican American Civil Rights*: 20–21; Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 168–169.
- 54 For an overview of efforts to promote democracy abroad in the 20th century, see Tony Smith, *America’s Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
- 55 John D. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002): 21–25.
- 56 Steele, “The Federal Government Discovers Mexican Americans,” in Griswold del Castillo, ed., *World War II and Mexican American Civil Rights*: 23–24; Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 36–37.
- 57 “Executive Order 8802: Establishing the Committee on Fair Employment Practices,” 25 June 1941, published as part of the American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu> (accessed 1 February 2008). For a discussion of FDR’s political position, see Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978): 320–323. See also David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 768.
- 58 Joe Roy Lujan, “Dennis Chavez and the Roosevelt Era, 1933–1945,” (Ph.D. diss., The University of New Mexico, 1987): 476.
- 59 “Spanish-Americans Ask Fair Play, Says Chavez,” 19 October 1944, *Los Angeles Times*: 12.
- 60 As quoted in Rosemary T. Diaz, “*El Senador*, Dennis Chavez: New Mexico Native Son, American Senior Statesman, 1888–1962,” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2006): 331,

see also 330–338.

- 61 Jay Walz, “FEPC’s Life Ends with No Hope Held for Early Revival,” 1 July 1946, *New York Times*: 1.
- 62 Lujan, “Dennis Chavez and the Roosevelt Era”: 515 and all of Chapter 11; “Negro Group Prays before Senators,” 1 September 1944, *New York Times*: 15. For the committee report, see Senate Committee on Education and Labor, *Prohibiting Discrimination in Employment Because of Race, Creed, Color, National Origin, or Ancestry*, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (24 May 1945), S. Rep. 290.
- 63 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (6 January 1945): 80; Lujan, “Dennis Chavez and the Roosevelt Era”: 522–524; “Senators Approve Extension of FEPC,” 24 May 1945, *New York Times*: 14.
- 64 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (8 February 1946): 1154–1155.
- 65 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (9 February 1946): 1194, 1196.
- 66 Lujan, “Dennis Chavez and the Roosevelt Era”: 539.
- 67 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 80th Cong., 2nd sess. (9 Feb. 1946): 1219.
- 68 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 170.
- 69 Juan Roman García, *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980): 3; Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*: 220.
- 70 García, *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954*: 3; Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*: 220; Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 19. According to Sánchez, the internment of Japanese Americans in 1942 aggravated the labor shortage.
- 71 As quoted in Calavita, *Inside the State*: 21.
- 72 Gilbert Paul Carrasco, “Bracero Program,” in Oboler and González, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 1: 220.
- 73 *Statutes at Large*, 57 Stat. 70, 1940–1943. For a detailed description of the Bracero Program in the 1950s and 1960s, see Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*: 138–147.
- 74 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 173–174.
- 75 Carrasco, “Bracero Program,” in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latina*, vol. 1: 221.
- 76 Calavita, *Inside the State*: 27–28; Carrasco, “Bracero Program,” in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas*, vol. 1: 221.
- 77 *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 1st sess. (27 June 1951): 7254.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 7260, 7261, 7264. The amendment was rejected 125 to 55.
- 79 *Congressional Record*, House, 78th Congress, 1st sess. (8 April 1943): 3104.
- 80 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 173–174. For McCarthy’s views, see *Congressional Record*, House, 87th Cong., 1st sess. (23 May 1961): 8596.
- 81 Carrasco, “Bracero Program,” in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas*, vol. 1: 223; Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 174.
- 82 García, *Operation Wetback*: 142.
- 83 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 173.
- 84 Joseph Nevins, “Deportations of Mexican-Origin People in the United States,” in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas*, vol. 1: 496.
- 85 Kelly Lytle Hernández, “The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943 to 1954,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 427.
- 86 Hernández, “The Crimes and Consequences”: 429; Calavita, *Inside the State*: 217.
- 87 Calavita, *Inside the State*: 32–36.

- 88 Nevins, "Deportations of Mexican-Origin People in the United States," in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia*, vol. 1: 497; Calavita, *Inside the State*: 47.
- 89 García, *Operation Wetback*: 159–160.
- 90 Ibid., 175.
- 91 Undocumented workers were often called *mojados* or "wetbacks." The term "wetback" first came into use around 1929 to define a person who illegally immigrated across the Rio Grande from Mexico to the United States. Although "wetback" is not classified by the *Oxford English Dictionary* or by most major U.S. dictionaries as offensive, its origins are controversial. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Vol. XX, comp. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), s.v. "wet." For one scholar's perspective about the term's offensiveness, see García, *Operation Wetback*: xvi.
- 92 García, *Operation Wetback*: 183.
- 93 Ibid., 217.
- 94 Nevins, "Deportations of Mexican-Origin People in the United States," in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia*, vol. 1: 497.
- 95 García, *Operation Wetback*: 192–193, 207.
- 96 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 177.
- 97 Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 45–48.
- 98 Ibid., 75–77. Hispanic Texans' participation varied according to the election procedures in their locality.
- 99 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 181–190; Marquez, *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization*: 53–55. Gonzales identifies two cases: *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County* (1947) and *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* (1948), which dismantled de jure school segregation in California and Texas, respectively. LULAC was involved in both class action lawsuits.
- 100 Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 66–67; Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*: 189–190.
- 101 Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 88–89.
- 102 Ibid., 88–92; Louis F. Weschler and John F. Gallagher, "Viva Kennedy," in Rocco J. Tresolini and Richard T. Frost, eds., *Cases in American National Government and Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966): 53–59; Eugene C. Lee and William Buchanan, "The 1960 Election in California," *Western Political Quarterly* 14, no. 1, part 2 (March 1961): 309–326.
- 103 Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 92.
- 104 Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*, 194–195; Gomez-Quinones, *Chicano Politics, Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 104–105. For a summary of the Chicano movement, see Jorge Mariscal, "Chicano/a Movement," in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 1: 320–321.
- 105 Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics, Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 101–105. See also pp. 92–97.
- 106 Ibid., 93–96, 108.
- 107 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 90th Cong., 1st sess. (18 May 1967): 13242–13243.
- 108 *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (3 April 1969): 8590–8591.
- 109 For more on MAYO, see Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 110–112, 128–131; Armando Navarro, "Mexican American Youth Organization," in Oboler and González, eds., *Oxford Encyclopedia*, vol. 3: 122–123; *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (29 April 1969): 10779. For a longer discussion, see *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (28 April 1969): 10522–10527.
- 110 See, for example, *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (16 April 1969): 9308–9309.
- 111 *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (22 April 1969): 9952.

- 112 Ralph Nader Congress Project, *Citizens Look at Congress: Henry B. Gonzalez: Democratic Representative from Texas* (Washington, D.C.: Grossman Publishers, 1972): 17.
- 113 “Rep. Gonzalez Strikes Back at ‘Uncle Tom’ Criticism,” 29 May 1969, *Dallas Morning News*.
- 114 Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos E. Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006): 28.
- 115 Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*: 28–29, 46–47.
- 116 *Ibid.*, 81.
- 117 J. Hernández-Alvarez, “The Movement and Settlement of Puerto Rican Migrants within the United States, 1950–1960,” *International Migration Review* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1968): 40–41. In 1960, 85 to 90 percent of Puerto Ricans lived in *colonias*. *Ibid.*, 51.
- 118 Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*: 54–57; Angelo Falcon, “A History of Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: 1860s to 1945,” in James Jennings and Monte Rivera, eds., *Puerto Rican Politics in Urban America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984): 21, 35; Hernández-Alvarez, “The Movement and Settlement of Puerto Rican Migrants within the United States”: 47–50.
- 119 Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*: 85.
- 120 César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007): 180–181.
- 121 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 197.
- 122 “The Migrants,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 141.
- 123 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 180–181; Hernández-Alvarez, “The Movement and Settlement of Puerto Rican Migrants within the United States, 1950–1960”: 41, 43.
- 124 “Letter to the Times: Economy of Puerto Rico,” 7 August 1947, *New York Times*: 20.
- 125 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 195; Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*: 78.
- 126 “Guidance Is Asked for Puerto Ricans,” 28 October 1947, *New York Times*: 17.
- 127 Translated by the authors from “En el Jet 55, a Nueva New York en un brinco.” See Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*: 70.
- 128 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 194; “The Migrants”: 144–145.
- 129 Jennings, “Introduction: The Emergence of Puerto Rican Electoral Activism in Urban America”: 5, 6.
- 130 Falcon, “A History of Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: 1860s to 1945”: 15, 18. The earliest of these organizations, including the Hermandad Puertorriqueña en América (Porto Rican Brotherhood of America), were formed in 1923 to help migrants adjust to life on the mainland and to offer protection from civil rights abuses. It also inspired the Liga Puertorriqueña e Hispana (Puerto Rican and Hispanic League) in 1927 as well as a variety labor and civic clubs. See Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*: 56.
- 131 Quoted in Falcon, “A History of Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: 1860s to 1945”: 22; Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*: 70.
- 132 Quoted in Falcon, “A History of Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: 1860s to 1945”: 22.
- 133 Jennings, “Introduction: The Emergence of Puerto Rican Electoral Activism in Urban America,” in Jennings and Rivera, eds., *Puerto Rican Politics in Urban America*: 7; Sherrie Bayer, “Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: The Post-World War II Period,” in Jennings and Rivera, eds., *Puerto Rican Politics in Urban America*: 44–45. The first Puerto Rican elected to state office, Oscar Garcia Rivera, who won a state assembly seat representing East Harlem in 1937, ran on a Republican-American Labor fusion platform. See Falcon, “A History of Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: 1860s to 1945”: 32.
- 134 Bayer, “Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: The Post-World War II Period”: 43, 46.
- 135 Peter Kihss, “Badillo Decries Name for School,” 20 April 1976, *New York Times*: 9.
- 136 Murray Schumach, “New Congressional Panel Will Investigate City’s Antipoverty Agencies,” 4 April 1971, *New York Times*: 38.

- 137 Bayer, "Puerto Rican Politics in New York City: The Post-World War II Period": 49, 53; Jennings, "Introduction: The Emergence of Puerto Rican Electoral Activism in Urban America": 8.
- 138 Jennings, "Introduction: The Emergence of Puerto Rican Electoral Activism in Urban America": 10–11.
- 139 Surendra Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1975): 93.
- 140 Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 110.
- 141 For a more detailed analysis of the PPD's shift on status, see Robert W. Anderson, *Party Politics in Puerto Rico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965): 55–57; Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 73–92; Richard E. Sharpless, "Puerto Rico," in Robert J. Alexander, ed., *Political Parties of the Americas* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982): 620–621.
- 142 Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600 and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico": 309–310.
- 143 Alfredo Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico, 1898–1952* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997): 118–120.
- 144 The push for greater Puerto Rican autonomy had bipartisan backing in Congress. See Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 101–102, 116; A. W. Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution* (San Juan: La Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2006): 285–286; Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 260.
- 145 A. W. Maldonado, who later served as the *San Juan Star's* chief Washington correspondent, recalls the last-minute passage in detail in his biography of Luis Muñoz Marín. See Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 260–261.
- 146 The Senate stripped the final legislation of the additional powers permitted the governor by the House proposal, including the ability to appoint members of the Puerto Rican supreme court. Under the final provision, Congress also retained the right to annul Puerto Rican laws. See Joseph Hearst, "New Puerto Rico Law Held Step for Autonomy," 10 August 1947, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 4.
- 147 Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 99.
- 148 *Ibid.*, 100.
- 149 Antonio Fernós-Isern, "The Significance of the Reform," (lecture, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and Foreign Affairs, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, May 5, 1948), published by the Office of Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C.; Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 259. The concept of an autonomous relationship with the United States had antecedents as far back as the 1920s. See Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 109.
- 150 Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 114–115, 140.
- 151 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 163; Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 316; Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 134.
- 152 Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 286.
- 153 *Ibid.*, 287, 292. Muñoz Marín and Fernós-Isern did not want to upset Puerto Rico's favorable economic relationship with the United States, which specified that federal taxes collected on the island were diverted to Puerto Rican coffers. Seeking a voting representative in Congress was also unacceptable, as that would entail the assumption of a federal tax burden.
- 154 *Ibid.*, 291.
- 155 Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 258; "Puerto Rico Constitution," *CQ Almanac 1950*, 6th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1951): 409.

- 156 *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1950): 9585. Senator Joseph O'Mahoney of Wyoming and Senator Butler introduced a similar measure in the Senate, S. 3336, on March 31. The Senate and House versions were nearly identical, but the Senate version contained two more clauses highlighting Puerto Rico's right to self-government. See also Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 126.
- 157 Representative Jacob Javits of New York also criticized the measure because it limited Puerto Ricans' status options, though Javits ultimately supported the bill. See "Puerto Rico Constitution": 409; <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal50-1378197>; Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 269.
- 158 *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1950): 9586.
- 159 "Puerto Rico Constitution": 409; <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal50-1378197>. Marcantonio's amendment was the only one that stood for a roll call vote. The final measure passed by voice vote. See Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico*: 132; *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1950): 9601–9602.
- 160 Quoted in Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600," 269; *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1950): 9601. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 had placed the jurisdiction of the Insular Affairs Committee (which the act also abolished) under the Public Lands Committee.
- 161 *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1950): 9602.
- 162 "Puerto Rico Hails Its 'Independence,'" 5 July 1950, *New York Times*: 24.
- 163 "Puerto Rico Hails Its 'Independence.'"
- 164 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 168.
- 165 Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 312–313; Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 272–273. See also Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico*: 135; Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 145.
- 166 The remaining four articles covered municipal organization, taxes, government salaries, and other administrative tasks. See Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico*: 135–136.
- 167 S. Gálvez Maturana, "Constituyente aprueba proyecto de constitución con votación de 88 a 3," 5 February 1952, *El mundo* (San Juan, PR): 1.
- 168 Antonio Fernós-Isern, *Original Intent in the Constitution of Puerto Rico*, 2nd ed. (Hato Rey, PR: Lexis-Nexis of Puerto Rico, Inc., 2002): 48. The bill of rights was authored by a committee chaired by future Resident Commissioner Jaime Benítez.
- 169 Fernós-Isern, *Original Intent in the Constitution of Puerto Rico*: xii.
- 170 Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 315.
- 171 Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 1809–2000*: 215; "Caribbean Charter," 9 March 1952, *Washington Post*: B4; "Letters to the Times," 17 March 1952, *New York Times*: 20; Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico*: 135–136; Anthony Leviero, "Truman Endorses Puerto Rican Code," 23 April 1952, *New York Times*: 10.
- 172 Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 263; "Puerto Rico Constitution": 409; <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal50-1378197>; Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 151.
- 173 Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 277; Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 123.
- 174 "Puerto Rico Constitution," in *CQ Almanac 1952*, 8th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1953): 231–232, <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal52-1381241>; Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 275; Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico*: 136–137; House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Approving the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Which Was Adopted by the People of Puerto Rico on March 3, 1952*, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1952, H. Rep. 1832; *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1952): 6167–6168.
- 175 Helfeld, "Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600": 293–295.

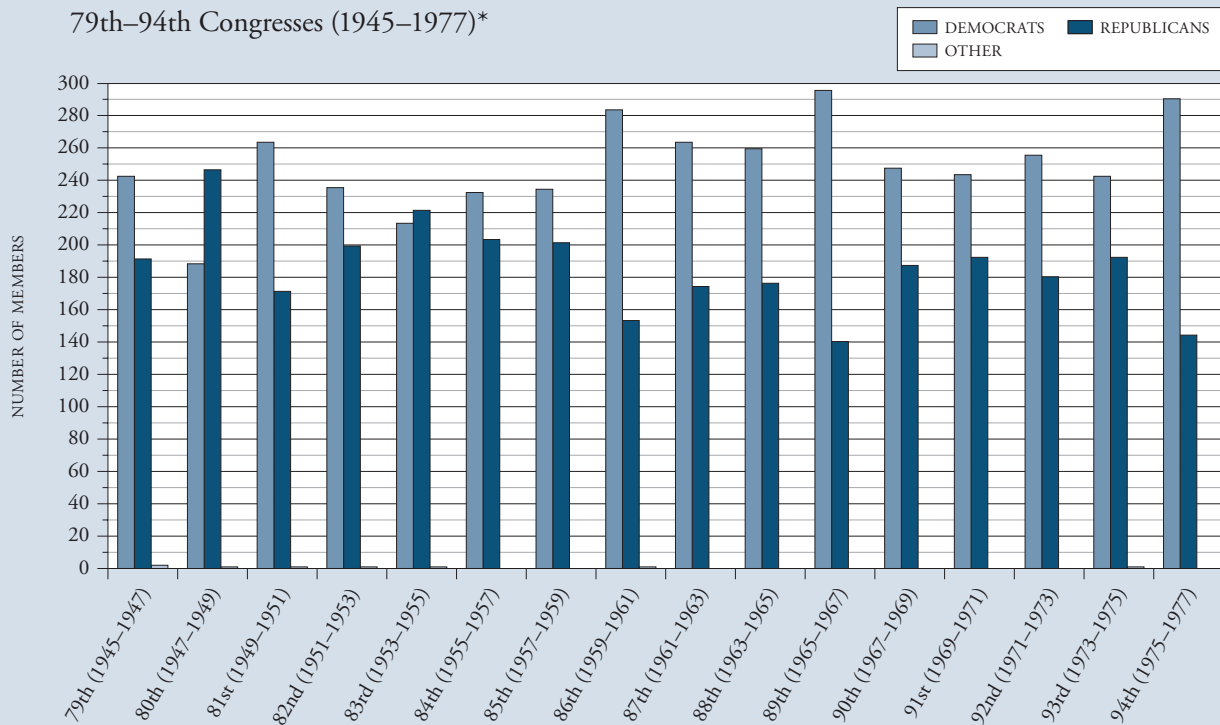
- 176 Ibid., 289.
- 177 *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1952): 6169.
- 178 Ibid., 6172.
- 179 The amendment also altered Section 5, which mentioned compulsory education, to permit Puerto Ricans to use private schools. See *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1952): 6181.
- 180 *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1952): 6175.
- 181 See, for example, the remarks of Noah Mason of Illinois; *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1952): 6172–6173.
- 182 Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 318–319; quoted on 321–322; Helfeld, “Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600”: 302; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (23 June 1952): 7841. Critics on the Senate Floor and in Puerto Rico accused Senator Johnston of taking vengeance on the Muñoz Marín administration. (Muñoz Marín had earlier rejected a request from Leonard Long, a contractor and a friend of Senator Johnston's, for a special tax exemption in Puerto Rico.) The *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and *El mundo* ran editorials against Johnston. See, for example “Human Rights in Puerto Rico,” 27 May 1952, *New York Times*: 26; “Nullification,” 25 June 1952, *Washington Post*: 14. Columnist Drew Pearson lobbied on behalf of Muñoz Marín. See Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 319.
- 183 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (23 June 1952): 7848, 7851; Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 322; Helfeld, “Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600”: 299; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (23 June 1952): 7846.
- 184 “Puerto Rico Constitution”: 231–232; <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal52-1381241>; Helfeld, “Congressional Intent and Attitude toward Public Law 600”: 304.
- 185 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 164, 169; Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 165. Muñoz Marín concluded, “The bill's importance is moral rather than practical.” Quoted in Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 169; from Zapata Oliveras (Spanish source).
- 186 Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico's Democratic Revolution*: 298.
- 187 Ibid., 321.
- 188 Ibid., 327; “Puerto Rico Hoists Flag of Autonomy,” 26 July 1952, *New York Times*: 11.
- 189 Quoted in *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico, 1898–1952*: 141. Other news magazines proclaimed a similar end of colonialism on the island; see, for example, “Retreat from Power,” *New Republic* 126, no. 22 (2 June 1952): 8.
- 190 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 172–173.
- 191 *Congressional Record*, House, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess. (26 July 1954): 12088.
- 192 Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968*: 165.
- 193 See Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 173–174 for an overview of the court challenges.
- 194 “Puerto Rico Commission,” in *CQ Almanac 1964*, 20th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1965): 434–435; see <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal64-1304813/> (accessed 8 May 2012).
- 195 Roland I. Perusse, *The United States and Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Equality* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger, 1990): 43.
- 196 *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 2nd sess. (23 April 1970): 12996.
- 197 Pedro Roman, “Benitez Says Island's Future Depends on Bonds with U.S.,” 10 August 1968, *San Juan Star*: 3.
- 198 Interview with Jaime Benítez, Former Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, “Should Puerto Rico Be a State?: No,” 11 April 1977, *U.S. News & World Report*: 47.
- 199 Montalvo-Barbot, *Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico*: 134.
- 200 *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (30 November 1950): 16004.

- 201 “400 in Puerto Rico Lay Down All Arms,” 3 November 1950, *New York Times*: 1.
- 202 “Assassin Enters Plea of Not Guilty; Judge Delays Setting Date For Trial,” 18 November 1950, *New York Times*: 8; “Rulers of the World Felicitate Truman,” 3 November 1950, *New York Times*: 20.
- 203 Paul P. Kennedy, “Truman Assassin Sentenced to Die,” 7 April 1951, *New York Times*: 1.
- 204 John Fisher, “5 Congressmen Shot Down,” 2 March 1954, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 1; “Communist Plot Charged,” 2 March 1954, *New York Times*: 19.
- 205 Fisher, “5 Congressmen Shot Down”; “Communist Plot Charged.”
- 206 “Attack Seen Red Inspired,” 2 March 1954, *Baltimore Sun*: 7. Fernós-Isern also revealed that New York police had informed him the previous month that communists “mingled” with members of the Independence Party of Puerto Rico in the city and that he was “not ready to absolve” communist complicity.
- 207 John Fisher, “Congressmen Gun Victims All May Live,” 3 March 1954, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 1.
- 208 William M. Blair, “Regrets Voiced by Muñoz Marín,” 3 March 1954, *New York Times*: 14. Speaker Martin relates a vivid account of the March 1 shooting in Joe Martin, *My First Fifty Years in Politics, as told to Robert J. Donovan* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960): 216–220.
- 209 José E. Rios, “The Office of Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico,” M.A. thesis, Georgetown University, 1969: 54. Rios worked in the office of Resident Commissioner Santiago Polanco-Abreu from 1964 to 1968.
- 210 Rios, “The Office of Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico”: 50.
- 211 *Ibid.*, 51–52, 55.
- 212 “The Editor’s Sunday Memo,” 23 August 1964, *San Juan Star*: 19; “The Editor’s Sunday Memo,” 30 August 1964, *San Juan Star*: 19.
- 213 “Polanco Abreu: A Will With an IBM’s Grasp,” 17 August 1964, *San Juan Star*: 15; Margot Preece, “Resident Commissioner or House Member—Problem for Polanco,” 21 August 1964, *San Juan Star*: 3.
- 214 *Congressional Record*, House, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess. (21 June 1954): 8548.
- 215 The House had already authorized a Delegate for the District of Columbia on September 22, 1970. See P.L. 91-405, 84 Stat. 852.
- 216 Hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Guam and the Virgin Islands Delegate to the House of Representatives*, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (16 March 1972).
- 217 “Depth of Change,” 7 November 1968, *San Juan Star*: 29.
- 218 “I’m a lobbyist on the inside, and the inside part of that is important,” Resident Commissioner Córdova-Díaz once said. See Robert L. Asher, “‘Congressman’ without a Vote,” 26 July 1970, *Washington Post*: B6.
- 219 Harry Turner, “Polanco in Congress,” 23 October 1968, *San Juan Star*: 25; Eddie Lopez, “Why the Populists Lost,” 8 November 1968, *San Juan Star*: 30; Harry Turner, “Córdova Diaz Talks of ‘New Approach,’” 5 December 1968, *San Juan Star*: 1.
- 220 Robert F. Levey, “A Nonvoting Delegate Tells of His Frustrations on Hill,” 5 April 1970, *Washington Post*: 53; Ralph Nader Congress Project, *Citizens Look at Congress: Jorge L. Córdova, Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico* (Washington, D.C.: Grossman Publishers, 1972): 1; Richard L. Madden, “Badillo Says U.S. Programs Are Excluding Puerto Ricans,” 5 May 1971, *New York Times*: 16; “51% in Puerto Rico Get Food Stamps,” 8 October 1975, *Los Angeles Times*: 12.
- 221 Levey, “A Nonvoting Delegate Tells of His Frustrations on Hill.” As quoted in Asher, “‘Congressman’ without a Vote.” See also “Around Town,” 21 September 1970, *Washington Post*: A22.
- 222 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1964): 23425.
- 223 George Gedda, “House Gives P.R. Commissioner Vote,” 16 September 1970, *San Juan Star*: 1.

- 224 For a cursory treatment of what one historian calls the “Córdova Amendment,” see Tansill, “The Resident Commissioner to the United States from Puerto Rico: An Historical Perspective”: 83, 98–100.
- 225 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (21 January 1971): 14. The House later extended these rights to the new Delegates from Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- 226 Philip Shenon, “In the House, But without Votes,” 12 April 1985, *New York Times*: A14.
- 227 Skrentny, *Minority Rights Revolution*: 28–33.
- 228 Philip Potter, “Defense,” 22 June 1956, *Baltimore Sun*: 1; Allen Drury, “Senators Weigh Cut in Military,” 4 April 1955, *New York Times*: 17; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 659. The “New Look” program was the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration’s strategy to contain communist expansion while controlling the U.S. defense budget.
- 229 Diaz, “*El Senador*”: 285–287.
- 230 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (12 May 1950): 6969. See also “New Senate Drive to Fight M’Carthy,” 15 May 1950, *New York Times*: 51; William S. White, “Budeniz Uses Catholic Church as a ‘Shield,’ Chavez Says,” 13 May 1950, *New York Times*: 1; “Ten Senators Urge Repeal of Red Law,” 2 October 1950, *New York Times*: 7; Diaz, “*El Senador*”: 242–303.
- 231 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (12 May 1950): 6969.
- 232 *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 1st sess., (16 July 1959): 13925–13926. See also Untitled campaign speech, “1962 file?-5 min. TV,” Box 64, Folder 1, Montoya Papers-CSWR; Gómez-Quíñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990*: 44–45.
- 233 “Roybal Again Facing Cavnar in 30th District,” 26 October 1970, *Los Angeles Times*: C2; “13 Congressmen Seek Injunction to Halt War,” 26 May 1971, *Los Angeles Times*: A4.
- 234 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (24 March 1971): 7912.
- 235 *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (6 November 1969): 33259.
- 236 *Congressional Record*, House, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (10 February 1970): 3195–3196.
- 237 Carmen Hilda Sanjurjo, “The Educational Thought of Jaime Benítez, Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico from 1942 to 1966,” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Teachers College, 1986): 80.
- 238 The U.S. House of Representatives’ Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities, chaired by Martin Dies, Jr., of Texas, was among the groups looking into the political sympathies of university faculty. “Benítez Opposed in Puerto Rico,” 1 November 1942, *New York Times*: 34; “Lovett Appointment Defended by Puerto Rico University Head,” 4 April 1944, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 11; “Defends Naming Lovett,” 4 April 1944, *New York Times*: 10.
- 239 *Congressional Record*, House, 89th Cong., 2nd sess. (3 March 1966): 4814–4815.
- 240 For Badillo’s and Córdova-Díaz’s statements, see *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (4 May 1971): 13343–13349. For Córdova-Díaz’s rebuttal of Badillo’s statements about Puerto Rican participation in the Vietnam War, see *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (5 May 1971): 13580.
- 241 John A. Garcia, “Congressional Hispanic Caucus,” in Oboler and González, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 1: 396.
- 242 Maurilio E. Vigil, “The Congressional Hispanic Caucus: Illusions and Realities of Power,” *Journal of Hispanic Policy* 4 (1989–1990): 19.
- 243 Vigil, “The Congressional Hispanic Caucus”: 23.
- 244 David Vidal, “Congressional Caucus Is Formed to Speak for Hispanic Population,” 9 December 1976, *New York Times*: 32.

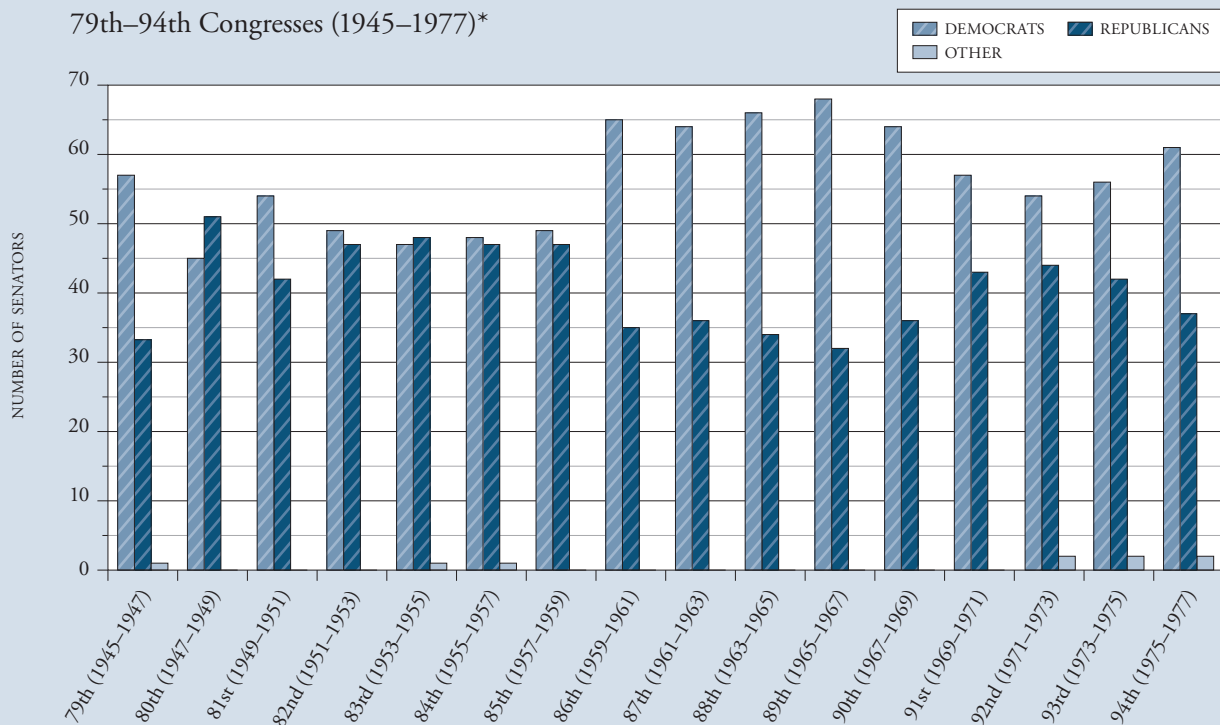
Party Divisions in the House of Representatives

79th–94th Congresses (1945–1977)*



Party Divisions in the Senate

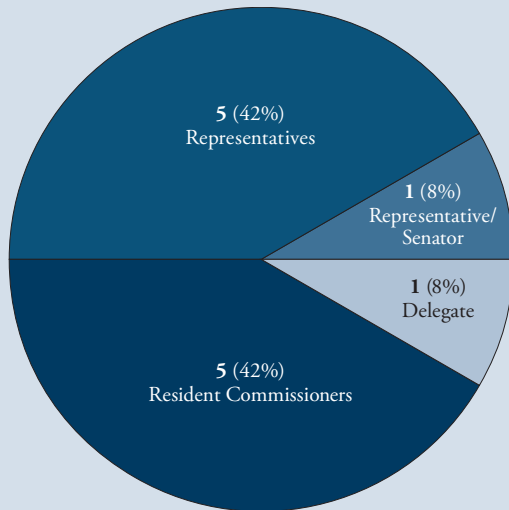
79th–94th Congresses (1945–1977)*



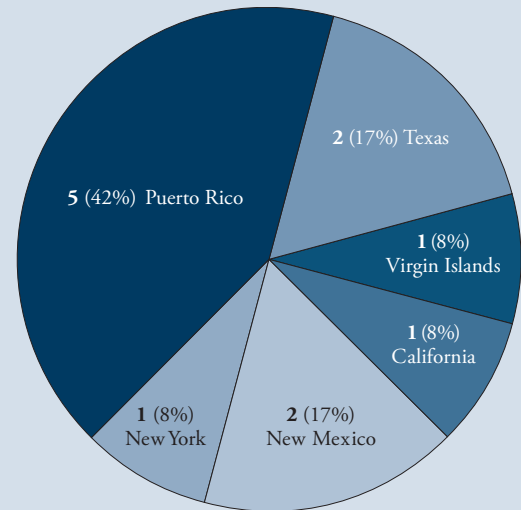
Source: *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–2005* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005); also available at <http://bioguide.congress.gov>; Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives; U.S. Senate Historical Office.

*Party division totals are based on election day results.

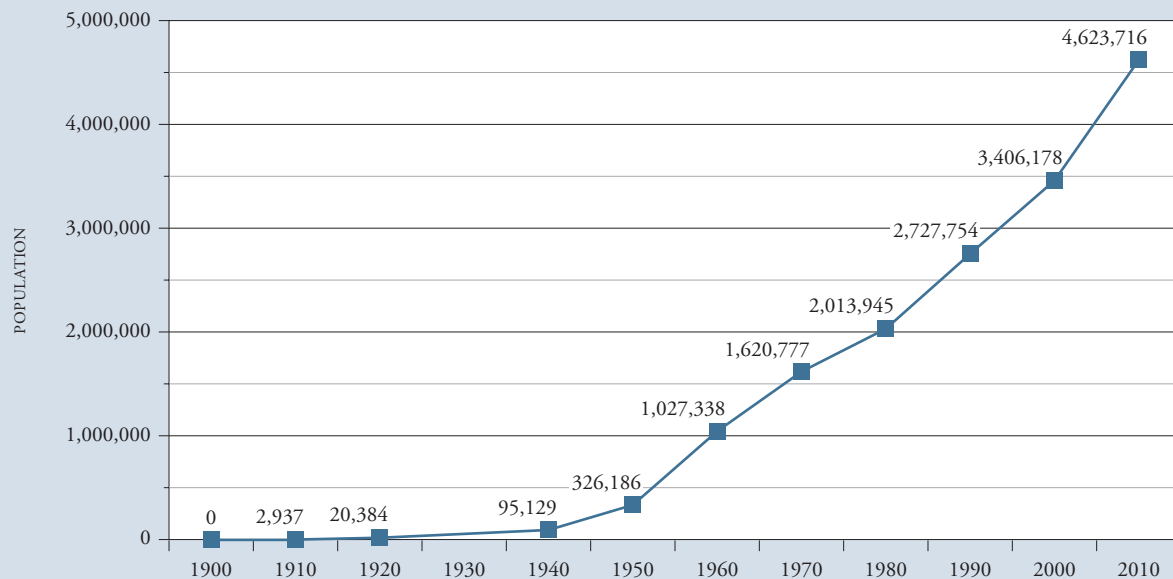
Hispanic-American Members by Office[†] 1945–1977



Hispanic-American Members by State and Territory[†] First Elected 1945–1977



Puerto Rican Population Growth in the United States[‡] 1900–2010*



Sources: [†] Appendix A: Hispanic-American Representatives, Senators, Delegates, and Resident Commissioners by Congress, 1822–2012; Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives; U.S. Senate Historical Office. [‡] U.S. Census Bureau; *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present, Millennial Edition*, eds. Richard Sutch and Susan B. Carter. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

*See the U.S. Census's footnotes on their methodology over time for determining the question of "Spanish Origin." No data was taken for the year 1930. Data includes all Puerto Ricans both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland United States.

Congressional Service

For Hispanic Americans in Congress First Elected 1944–1976

